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DECEMBER 2013

Designers' secrets

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editor's letter

A dusting of snow can bring a bit of sparkle to even the most ordinary of gardens. But how can you guarantee your garden looks magical this late in the year even without Jack Frost's help? It is without doubt the trickiest of seasons to achieve this, so we ask four leading designers for their design advice and suggestions for plants that will do the trick. Roses are the quintessential plant of an English summer garden yet a number of repeat-flowerers may give you a few precious blooms as late as December. I find roses irresistible whatever the season, so to find out which cultivars give the best chance of late flowers, we ask expert rosarian Charles Quest-Ritson to recommend a selection of his favourites. For further planting inspiration, we visit the Royal Horticultural Society's flagship garden at Wisley in Surrey and, in the final part of his series, Great Dixter's head gardener Fergus Garrett reveals his favourite plants for December. To celebrate the festive season in style, we feature a lovely selection of gifts for gardeners, and designer Kristy Ramage provides a step-by-step guide to creating some charming decorations using snippets from the garden. If, like me, you're missing spending time outdoors, then this is the perfect excuse for a winter walk, secateurs and a basket in hand. I hope you enjoy the issue and may I take this opportunity to wish you all a wonderful Christmas.

Juliet

GARDENS
ILLUSTRATED
Designers' secrets

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A number of repeat-flowering roses will still have blooms as late as the first frosts. See page 54.

Take a walk on the wild side and bring the beauty of nature into your home this Christmas. See page 46.

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

FERGUS GARRETT
Plantsman and head gardener at Great Dixter in East Sussex.

CAROL KLEIN
Plantswoman and presenter of BBC *Gardeners' World*.

DANIEL J HINKLEY
American plantsman, plant hunter, horticultural writer and lecturer.

ALYS FOWLER
Kew-trained gardener, author and television presenter.

DAN PEARSON
Garden designer, plantsman and columnist.

GAP PHOTOS / FRIEDRICH STRAUSS, BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER

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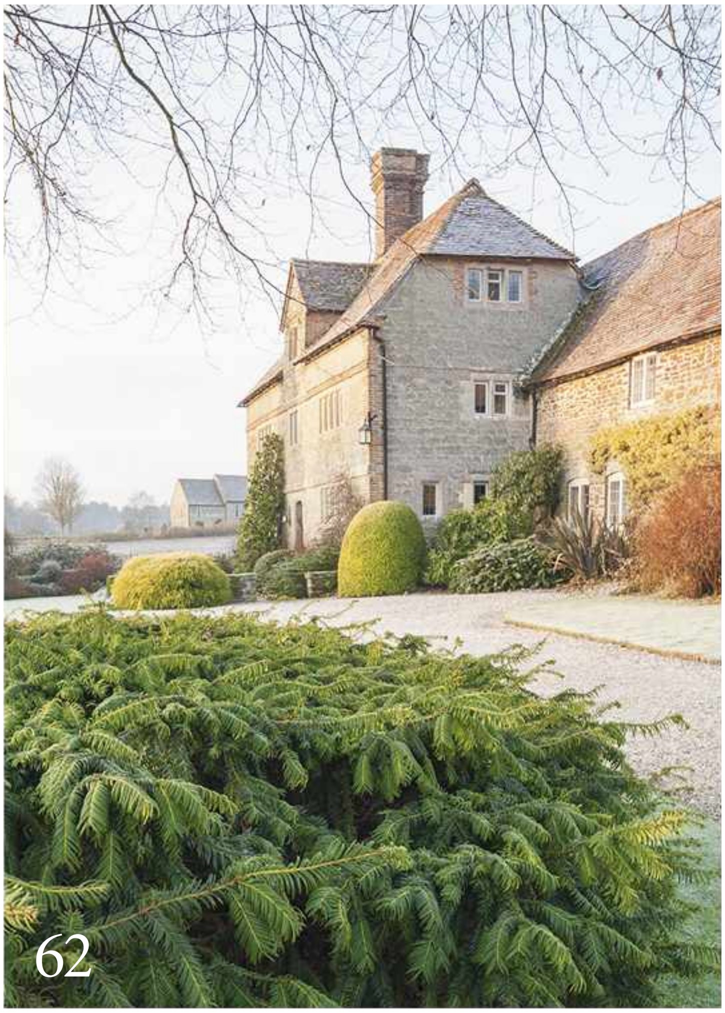

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Photograph by
Denise Grünstein

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BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER, CAROLE DRAKE, SHARON PEARSON, JANE SEBIRE

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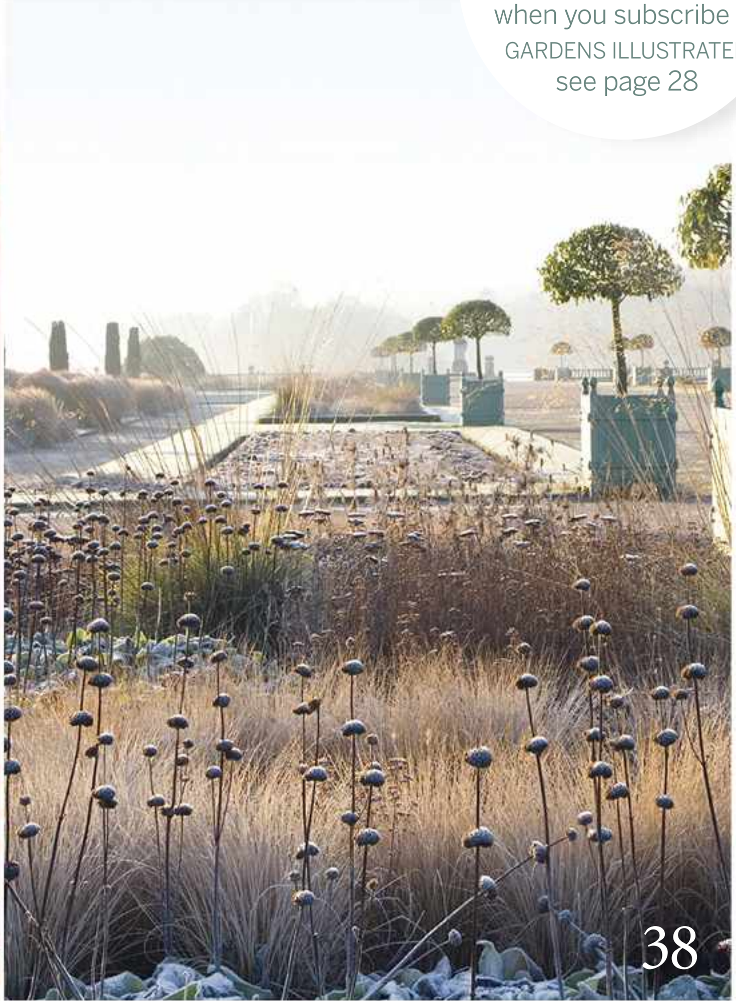

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- Win a **VIP day at RHS Chelsea Flower Show** – see page 100
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- Get 20% off **Green & Spring** Christmas skincare collections – see page 101

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ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES

☎ +44 (0)117 933 8072 🖱 lucy.moakes@immediate.co.uk

EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES

☎ +44 (0)117 314 7440 🖱 gardens@gardensillustrated.com

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MAGAZINE CONTACTS

EDITORIAL

Editor	Juliet Roberts
Contributing editors	Alys Fowler, Fergus Garrett, Daniel J Hinkley, Carol Klein & Dan Pearson
Art director	David Grenham
Deputy editor	Sorrel Everton
Deputy art editor	Niki Goss
Production editor	Juliet Giles
Features editor	Sue Wingrove
Designer	Victoria Simpson
Botanical adviser	Dr James Compton

ADVERTISING

Advertisement director	Caroline Herbert
Deputy advertising manager	Lucy Moakes **0117 933 8072** lucy.moakes@immediate.co.uk
Classified sales executive	Katie Larkman **0117 314 8391** katie.larkman@immediate.co.uk
USA advertising representative	Kate Buckley buckley@buckleypell.com
Advertising designer	Matt Gynn

INSERTS

Laurence Robertson	**+353 (0)876 902208**

CIRCULATION, MARKETING, PRESS & PR

Newstrade manager	Rob Brock
Subscriptions Director	Jacky Perales-Morris
Direct Marketing Manager	Aimee Rhymer
Press officer	Carolyn Wray **0117 314 8812**

MANAGEMENT

Chairman	Stephen Alexander
Chief executive officer	Tom Bureau
Managing director, Bristol	Andy Marshall
Associate Publisher	Marie Davies

SYNDICATION AND LICENSING

Head of licensing & syndication	Joanna Marshall

PRODUCTION

Production director	Sarah Powell
Production co-ordinator	Emily Mounter

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contributors

TIM RICHARDSON

Tim is a garden historian and critic, and sits on the advisory panel of the National Trust. A columnist in the *Daily Telegraph* and author of several books (including his latest, *The New English Garden*), he shares his ten favourite books on gardens on page 87.

"One develops a strong sense of gratitude both to the books themselves and to the people who took the trouble to write them."

CAROLE DRAKE

Carole was a fine artist until a passion for plants led her up the garden path. She now photographs and writes about plants and gardens – the perfect mix of picture-making and horticulture. Carole lives in Somerset. Her photographs of Coates Manor are on page 62.

"Coates Manor has a quiet, unostentatious beauty I find extremely refreshing, especially with a light dusting of frost."

CHARLES QUEST-RITSON

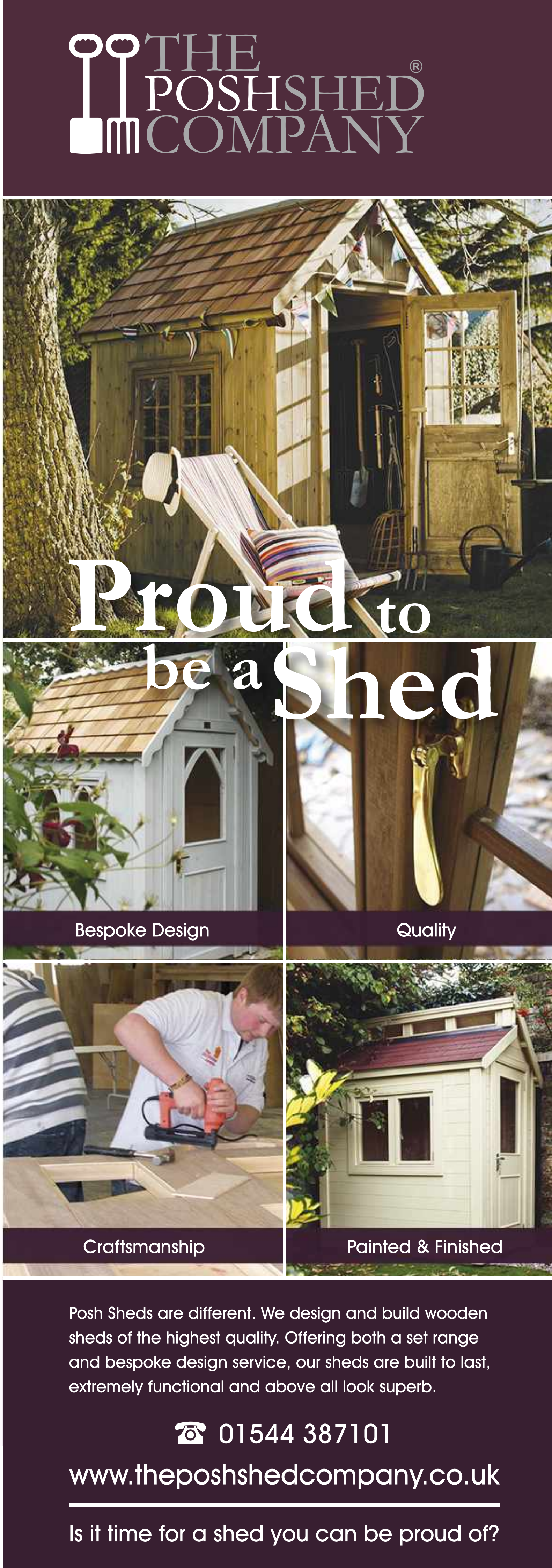
Charles has written many books about gardens and gardening, including the *RHS Encyclopedia of Roses,* which he co-authored with his wife Brigid. On page 54 he shares his expertise on roses that continue to flower into winter.

"Forget all those boring grasses and dying seed-heads – for scent and colour in autumn you can't beat roses."

KRISTY RAMAGE

After a degree in illustration, Kristy made automata before turning her passion for gardens into a career by working with garden designer Arne Maynard. Reviving her love of making things, she turns to the garden to source materials for 'decking the halls' on page 46.

"I collect lots of material first – huge baskets of twigs, berries and seedheads – then all you need is a fire, a radio and time to play."



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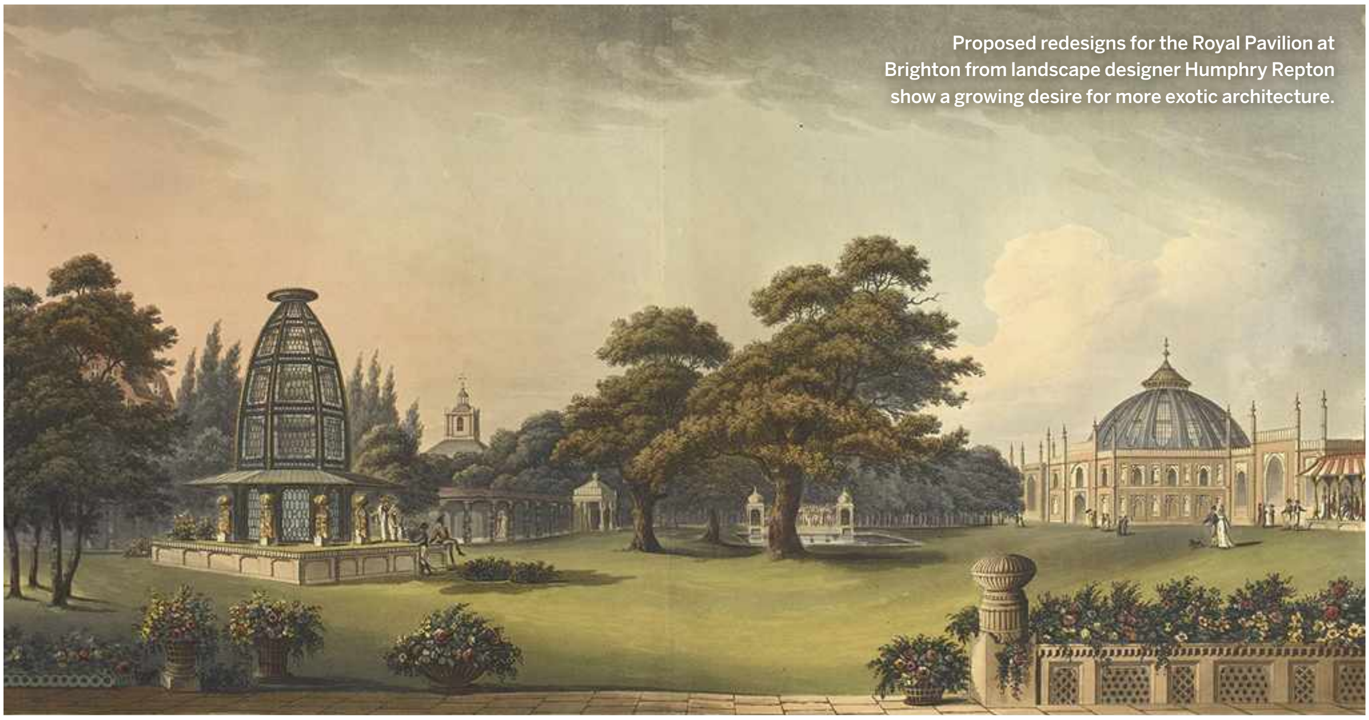
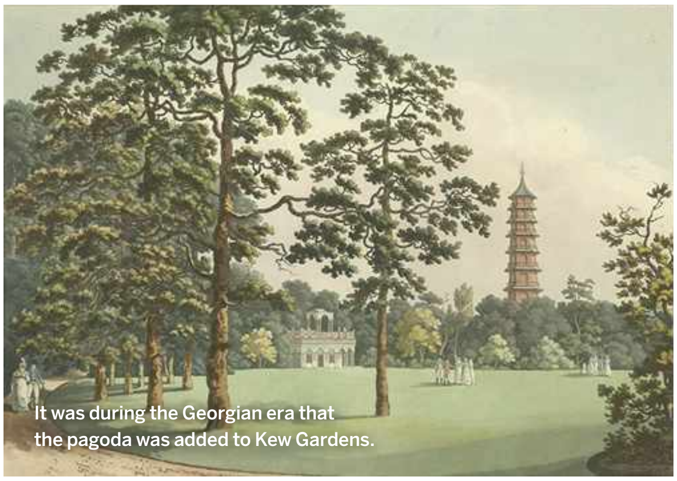
Dig in

News, gardening talent, nurseryman's favourites, gardener's notes, shopping

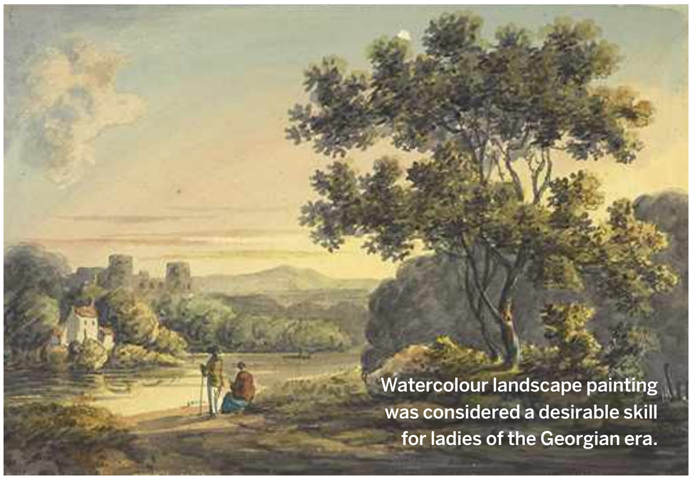
NEWS COMPILED BY SORREL EVERTON



Proposed redesigns for the Royal Pavilion at Brighton from landscape designer Humphry Repton show a growing desire for more exotic architecture.



It was during the Georgian era that the pagoda was added to Kew Gardens.



Watercolour landscape painting was considered a desirable skill for ladies of the Georgian era.

HUMPHRY REPTON, DESIGNS FOR THE PAVILION AT BRIGHTON, LONDON, 1808; H. SCHUTZ, A VIEW IN KEW GARDENS OF THE ALHAMBRA & PAGODA, 1798; JOHN LAPORTE, THE PROGRESS OF A WATER COLOURED DRAWING, LONDON, [c.1812] © BRITISH LIBRARY

EXHIBITION

Georgian advances

An obsession with social mobility, leisure activities, celebrity and conspicuous consumption were as much a part of life in the Georgian era as they are today. This influential and innovative age (1714-1830), is explored in the British Library's latest exhibition, *Georgians Revealed: Life, Style and the Making of Modern Britain*. Among the growing fashions for shopping, tea drinking, reading and classical architecture was a desire to garden and to create garden legacies and the exhibition draws on the British Library's rich archive of illustrated books, newspapers, maps and advertisements to reveal how Britain's obsession with gardening really took hold. Alongside the historic material, contemporary designer Todd Langstaffe-Gowan has created a temporary garden installation on the Library's piazza that reflects the Georgian's delight in using nature for public entertainment and spectacle.

- British Library, until 11 March 2014. Events include talk *In an English Country Garden* with Todd Langstaffe-Gowan and horticultural installation artist Tony Heywood, 29 November, 6.30-8pm. 01937 546546, bl.uk.

Peter Beales

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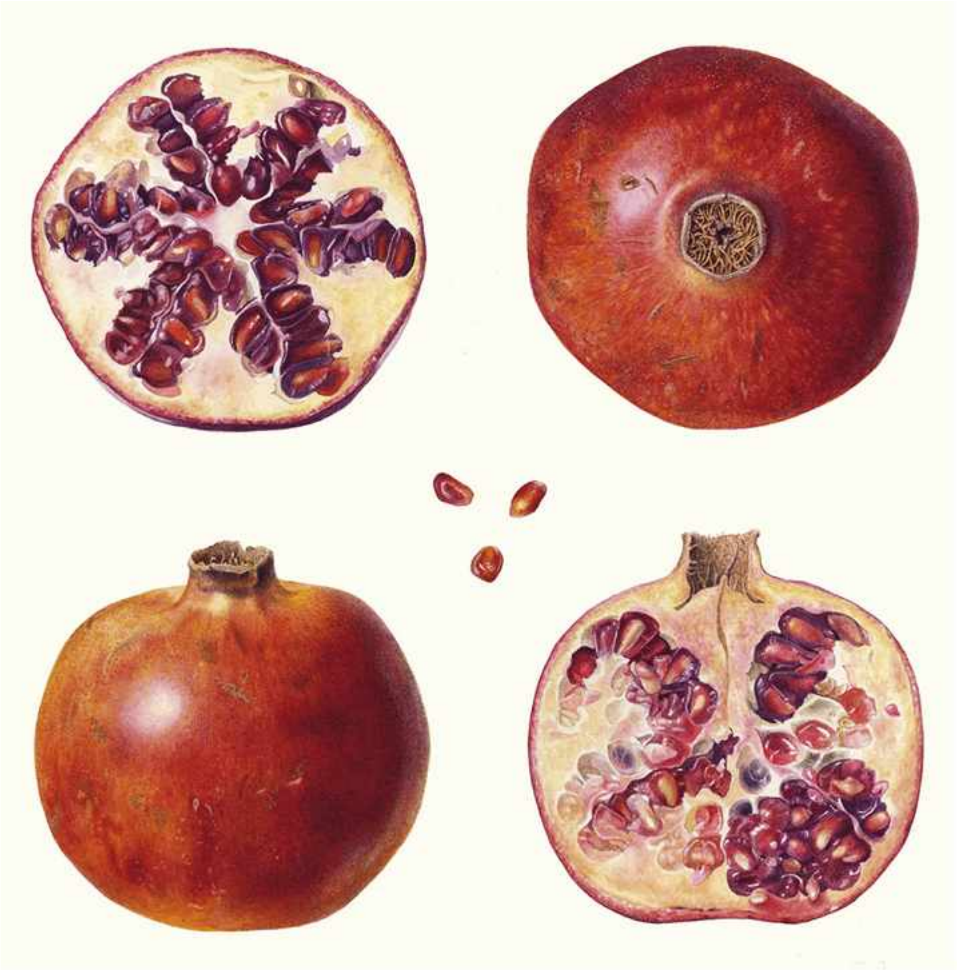

COURSE

Botanical painting

This coming January sees the launch of the Chelsea School of Botanical Art run by artist Helen Allen. The main course offered is the prestigious Diploma Course in Botanical Illustration and Painting (previously administered by the English Gardening School, where Helen was the course director). The next diploma course starts in January 2014, held at the Chelsea Physic Garden, London. Short courses are available through the summer. Tel 07585 862879, chelseaschoolofbotanicalart.co.uk

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Mistletoe Festival

The Shropshire town of Tenbury Wells has been home to traditional Mistletoe Auctions for over 100 years, where large bundles of freshly cut festive boughs are sold to the highest bidders. There are three auction days: 26 November, 3 and 10 December, 10am sharp. Bundles of holly are also sold. The auctions are part of the town's Mistletoe Festival, offering a host of seasonal events, 22 November – 22 December. Auction and festival details at tenbury-mistletoe-festival.co.uk

POMEGRANATES © CAROLYN JENKINS

TREAT

Purveyor of tasty treats Bettys of Harrogate has some tempting milk chocolate pine cones in its Christmas range, £7.50 for a bag of five. Also available, in milk or white chocolate, are cones with a caramel centre, £2.20 each. Tel 0845 600 1919, bettys.co.uk

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TELEVISION SERIES

Save our gardens

Key garden features that made British gardens great are under threat as front gardens are paved over and families demand easily managed outdoor spaces. Step forward 14 gardening presenters, including Monty Don, Sarah Raven and Alys Fowler, to champion the importance of gardening in a new television series. Topiary, shrubs – even rockeries are highlighted to rekindle our passions for gardening in all its variety. *Great British Garden Revival*, BBC Two, 7pm from 9 December.

Alys Fowler champions the traditional kitchen garden.

Garden staple the Felco secateur has just been given an upgrade. Felco 7, 10, 12 and 50 have had their rotating handle improved to give more effective and ergonomic cutting. A new, softer, more grippy coating makes them more comfortable to hold. felco.com

TO GROW

Wasabi plants

Gardeners wanting to grow something new for 2014 could try wasabi – the fiery horseradish-like accompaniment to many Japanese dishes. Used fresh, the rhizome is superior in taste to the normally available pastes and powders. Plant in a shady, damp spot in the garden, the plant will produce large, heart-shaped leaves and grow to 60cm high. It will be ready to harvest in a couple of years. A rhizome costs £7.50 from Dorset-based The Wasabi Company. Tel 01929 463824, thewasabicompany.co.uk

Diary

Christmas at Kew

- **West Green House Christmas Fair**
Workshops, winter-garden tours and stylish gifts and decorations to buy. Until 8 December, 11am-4pm. Please check for details of activities and costs. West Green House, Thackhams Lane, Hartley Wintney, Hampshire RG27 8JB. Tel 01252 844611, westgreenhouse.co.uk
- **Christmas at Kew**
Explore a mile-long illuminated trail through the garden to discover Kew's plants and landmarks in a festive light. Thursday to Sunday, 28 November – 23 December, then 26 December – 4 January, 4.30-10pm. £12.50 adult, £8 child. Book in advance 0844 995 9675, kew.org
- **Christmas Floristry Creative Workshop.**
Two one-day courses to make your own wreath or table arrangement with natural materials. 3 and 4 December, 10am-4pm, £110. Cambridge University Botanic Garden, 1 Brookside, Cambridge CB2 1JE. Please book on 01223 331875, botanic.cam.ac.uk
- **The Winter Garden**
Mark Divall, gardener at Charleston Farmhouse, talks about identifying winter trees, protecting tender plants, propagation and planting spring bulbs. 6 December, 10am-1pm, £35. Charleston, Firle, Lewes, East Sussex BN8 6LL. Tel 01323 811626, charleston.org.uk
- **Painshill Christmas Decoration Workshop**
Make decorations using willow, holly, ivy and other garden materials. 5 December, 10.30am-3.30pm, £65. Painshill, Portsmouth Road, Cobham, Surrey KT11 1JE. Book in advance on 01932 868113, painshill.co.uk

BOOK AHEAD

- **Tickets for Royal Horticultural Society shows 2014** go on sale from 1 December (members tickets are already on sale). Shows such as the Chelsea Flower Show and Hampton Court Palace sell out fast, so make your plans now. Full details of the RHS shows calendar at rhs.org.uk
- **New Zealand's premier garden show**, the Ellerslie International Flower Show, will be held in Christchurch from 26 February to 2 March 2014. Top designers create show gardens plus nursery displays. Tickets are on sale at ellerslieflowershow.co.nz
- **Sir Roy Strong gives a garden design talk** 'Remaking a Garden' about his work at The Laskett Gardens, his home for 40 years. 16 May 2014, 10.30am-3.30pm, £60 (in aid of Southern Spinal Injuries Trust). Held at Yeo Valley Organic Garden, Blagdon, Somerset BS40 7YE. Book on 01985 841194, ssit.org.uk

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Owen Vaughan

At 28 Owen is already the head gardener of a 63-acre estate, and an earlier project so impressed the RHS it created an Award of Gardening Excellence especially for him

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Earliest garden memories My parents used to take us to lots of National Trust and English Heritage properties. Even at the age of four I would run through the houses as fast as possible to explore the gardens. And the smell of *Buxus*; even today it evokes strong memories.

First plant love Ferns – I'm fascinated by their evolution and social history, also aesthetically; I don't think you can get a better green-coloured plant in the garden.

Who are your horticultural heroes? My biggest hero is Christopher Lloyd, I am completely in awe of what he created at Great Dixter and his other contributions to horticulture. To me he epitomised what a good gardener should be, knowledgeable, creative, generous with his gift and flamboyant.

Three most worthwhile tips for every gardener Always experiment; read the books, but form your own opinions and methods. Visit specialist plant nurseries, the advice you receive is excellent and the prices are generally cheaper. Finally, write everything down, you'll be amazed what you forget.

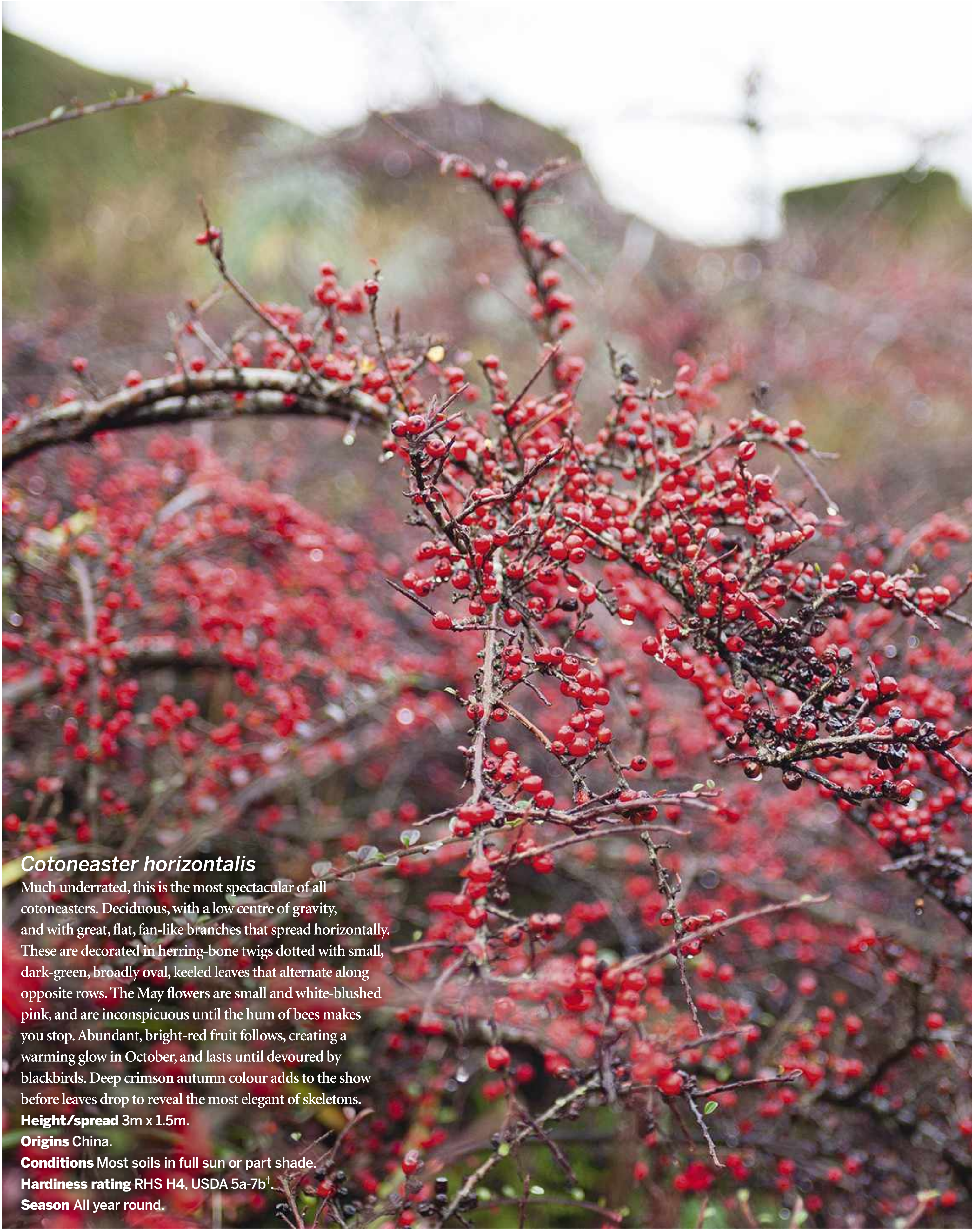
Most valuable training It has to be the 12 months I spent working as a trainee gardener at Highgrove. It was a fantastic opportunity to work and learn in such a beautiful garden and for a boss who was so passionate about the garden and the wider environment.

Unsung hero of the plant world *Sambucus*. As a conventionally grown shrub, it's a bit nondescript, but I'm a big fan of annual coppicing in order to produce large, highly ornamental leaves. My favourite is *Sambucus nigra* f. *porphyrophylla* 'Black Lace' – you lose the flowers, but gain on the beautifully large leaves.

Biggest challenge facing gardeners today It is difficult for young gardeners in their twenties to break into serious horticulture, as I think there may still be some prejudice when it comes to recruiting youngsters into the gardening world. I'm glad the Institute of Horticulture is now a chartered institute, this means professionally trained and qualified gardeners will get the professional recognition.

Favourite gardening books or blogs My favourite books are old and antique gardening books. I have a number of books from the 18th century. I love the fact that some horticultural principles written about 300 years ago are similar to those we follow today albeit with a few small differences.

Contact email owen.d.t.vaughan@hotmail.co.uk



Cotoneaster horizontalis

Much underrated, this is the most spectacular of all cotoneasters. Deciduous, with a low centre of gravity, and with great, flat, fan-like branches that spread horizontally. These are decorated in herring-bone twigs dotted with small, dark-green, broadly oval, keeled leaves that alternate along opposite rows. The May flowers are small and white-blushed pink, and are inconspicuous until the hum of bees makes you stop. Abundant, bright-red fruit follows, creating a warming glow in October, and lasts until devoured by blackbirds. Deep crimson autumn colour adds to the show before leaves drop to reveal the most elegant of skeletons.

Height/spread 3m x 1.5m.

Origins China.

Conditions Most soils in full sun or part shade.

Hardiness rating RHS H4, USDA 5a-7b[†].

Season All year round.

December plants

As the year bows out, Fergus too takes leave of this slot with his final choice of favourite plants. In February we welcome Derry Watkins of Special Plants

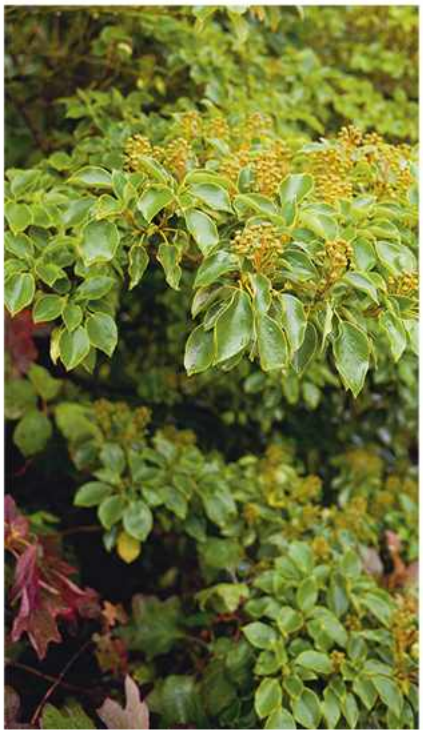
WORDS FERGUS GARRETT PHOTOGRAPHS SHARON PEARSON

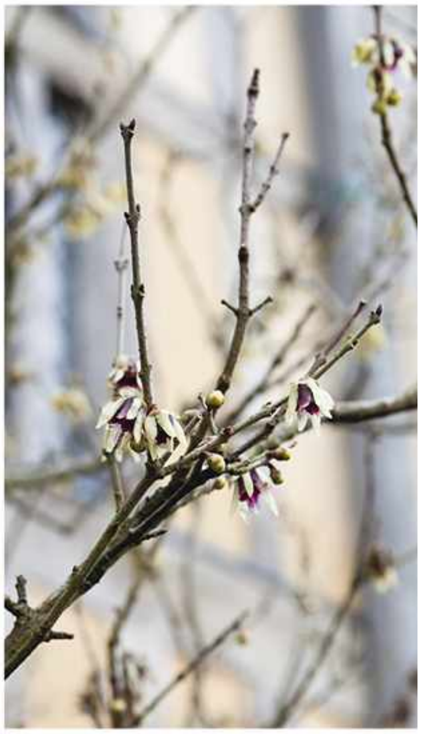
Fergus Garrett is a plantsman and head gardener at Great Dixter in East Sussex where he continues the legacy of the late, great Christopher Lloyd. Fergus also lectures, writes and serves on Royal Horticultural Society committees.

Trochodendron aralioides

A slow-growing, large, evergreen tree with tiers of branches in distinct layers. The deep emerald-green, oval leaves are shallowly toothed at the upper end, and finish in an acuminate tip with a light twist. The flowers are naked, without petals or sepals. Primitive looking, they resemble green crowns and are held in conical, terminal clusters. These develop from April to June and go on to hold dust-like seed. Resembles a tree-ivy but with a sophisticated patterned arrangement of leaves and branches. Our form is glossy with a darker upper surface and a pale rim.

Height/spread 20m x 10m.
Origins Northern Honshu Island, Japan, and Korea.
Conditions Good soil in sun or shade.
Hardiness rating RHS H4.
Season All year round.



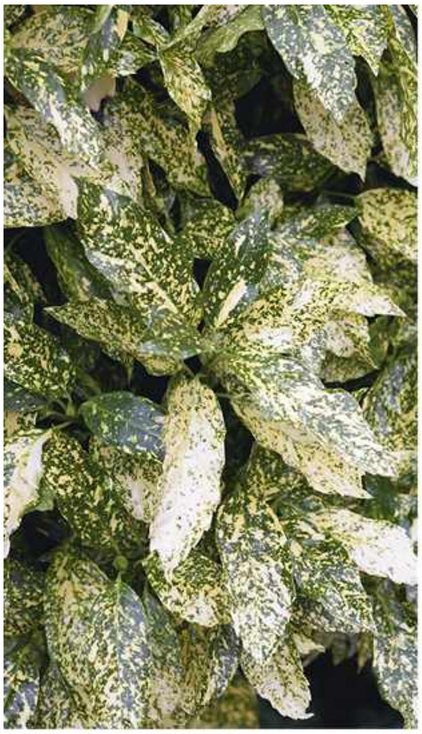


Chimonanthus praecox

A lumpy, deciduous shrub with dull leaves that looks unremarkable for most of the year. Until now that is, when numerous brown, globular buds open into a scattering of downward-facing blooms that shimmer in the winter wet. These are interspersed throughout a naked twiggy body and are deliciously scented, filling the air with a deep, sweet, spicy aroma. You are hypnotically drawn in close to the small, nodding, translucently pale, yellow flowers, each of which is decorated by an inner ring of deep maroon. Just a few sparse cut twigs can transform a room.

Height/spread 2.5m x 2.5m.
Origins Mountains up to 3,000m in China.
Conditions Sun or part shade in most soils.
Hardiness rating USDA 6a-9b.
Season December.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society
†Hardiness ratings given where available



Aucuba japonica 'Crotonifolia'

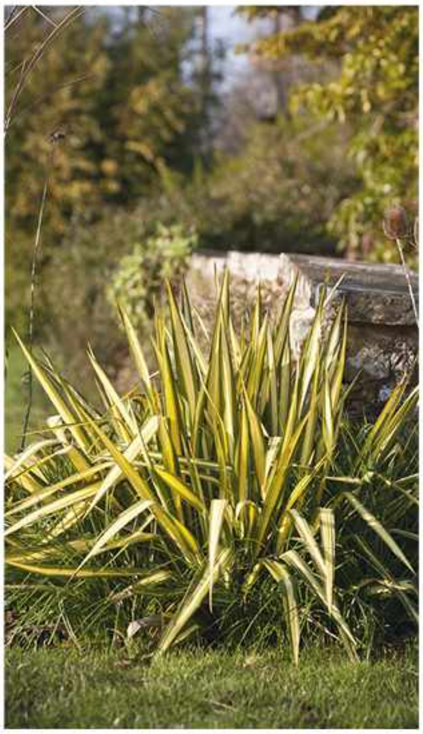
Spotted laurels have been much abused in recent years, planted in, and associated with, the most inhospitable places. Our 'Crotonifolia' is a male with large leathery, elliptic leaves, which are shallowly serrated, and heavily blotched with yellow. It makes a handsome, rounded, evergreen shrub that is conspicuous throughout the year but especially bright in spring with a flush of fresh foliage. The flowers, which are small and form in loose clusters, are a curious, chocolate-purple colour. Bright-red berries follow on female neighbours. Old fashioned and divisive, not to everyone's taste. AGM*.

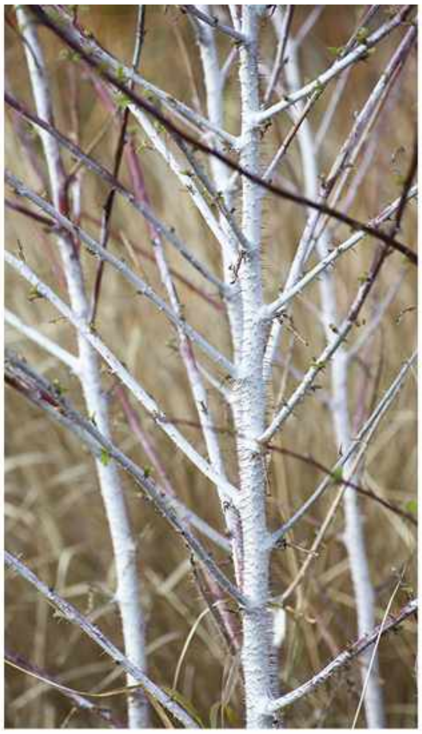
Height/spread 2m x 2m.
Origins Native to China and Japan.
Conditions Most soils in part or full shade.
Hardiness rating RHS H5.
Season All year round.

Yucca flaccida 'Golden Sword'

Although relatively new to me, I've been struck by this neat and compact yucca. It has stiff, sharply pointed, sword-like leaves that are distinctly striped yellow in the centre and interrupted by lines of green along its margins before being framed by a broad band of green. Thread-like, curly hairs decorate the edges, and bell-shaped, ivory white flowers, flushed red, are carried on side branches in upright panicles in late summer. Glowing yellow and green, it makes a striking impression especially in winter when all around it is subdued. AGM.

Height/spread 1.5m x 1m.
Origins A form of *Yucca flaccida*, which is a native of the USA.
Conditions Full sun in well-drained soil.
Hardiness rating RHS H3.
Season All year round.





GAP PHOTOS / MICHAEL HOWES

Rubus thibetanus

A deciduous, suckering shrub with purplish, upright, prickly stems, covered in a frosty white bloom with layers of filigree grey-green leaves felted silver underneath. The stems are biennial and become increasingly dramatic in colour as you move down from the smoky mauve tips, making an attractive ashen mass. The coarse-textured foliage is pinnate and composed of several serrated leaflets. The small flowers are purplish pink and held in large, woolly calyxes. Bluish black, inedible fruit follows. AGM.

Height/spread 1.5m x 1.5m.
Origins Dry ravines of the Min River Valley, Sichuan Province, western China.
Conditions Sun or part shade in moist but well-drained soil.
Hardiness rating RHS H5.
Season May – March.

Taking stock

Fergus offers five tips to help you make the most of gardening down time and prepare for the coming year.

Revisit your notebook. Getting inspiration from visits is one thing, but you need to collate all your previous year's thoughts and focus on the year ahead. Now's the time to look through all the notes you've taken over the past 12 months, make lists of coveted plants, remind yourself of the intended changes to planting combinations and of the work you need to do to take your garden forward. Make this an annual event, just as Christo did.

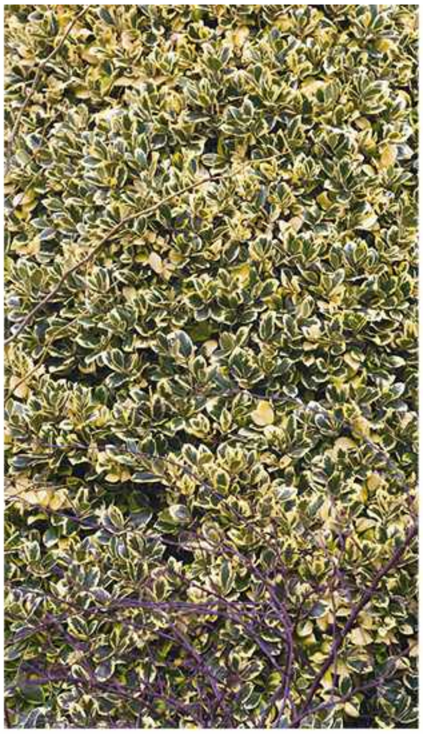
GAP PHOTOS / LYNN KEDDIE

Source reliable suppliers. Now is a good time to seek out a horticultural supplier from which to buy your grit, mushroom compost or composted bark as well as anything else you need. Scaffolding planks and pieces of plywood are useful for working off a cold path or when soil is in danger of being compacted, so befriending

Melianthus major

Christo's favourite foliage plant, with impressive, greyish, blue-green, pinnate foliage, subdivided into several bold obovate leaflets that are deeply serrated like a shark's teeth. These are clasped around grey-green stems, held in complex layers casting intricate shadows. Not completely hardy, it needs a deep nest of fern fronds to protect its roots. Two-year-old shoots will flower in the spring with dramatic spikes of bizarre, nectar-laden, chocolate-coloured, tubular blooms followed by green pods. AGM.

Height/spread 2m x 1.5m.
Origins Endemic to South Africa. Naturalised India, Australia, New Zealand.
Conditions Good, well-drained soil in sun or semi-shade.
Hardiness rating RHS H3.
Season June – December (frost allowing).



Ilex x altaclerensis 'Golden King'

Clipped tight into a narrow columnar shape this makes an impressive feature on the Long Border at Great Dixter. Its broad, oblong leaves are occasionally spined but overall smooth to the touch. Leaves have a hefty margin of golden yellow followed by a thin mottled irregular band of pale green then a richer, deeper centre. Some leaves are wholly yellow but don't develop. Contrary to its name, this is a female and regularly laden with berries from October that colour intense red just in time for Christmas. AGM.

Height/spread 5m x 4m.
Origins Sport of *Ilex* x *altaclerensis* 'Hendersonii'.
Conditions Good soil in sun or semi-shade.
Hardiness rating RHS H6.
Season All year round.

Cortaderia selloana 'Aureolineata'

This spectacular pampas grass has expansive foliage, that makes a luxuriant, large, evergreen clump. The individual leaves, margined in slender bands of yellow, are over 1m long and razor sharp. Collectively the effect is dramatic, making a large mound of bright yellow and, unlike the white-banded 'Albolineata', it is unaffected by cold winters or hot summers, keeping its foliage vibrant for most of the year.

Height/spread 1m x 1.5m.
Origins A form of the temperate South American Pampas grass *Cortaderia selloana*.
Conditions Full sun in moist, well-drained soil.
Hardiness rating RHS H5.
Season All year round.

ZENA ELEA / ALAMY

a scaffolder can certainly help ease the pain of working in the wet. Ask around for a local woodsman from whom you can buy harvested poles, stakes or peasticks. We're lucky enough to have our own coppice, which means we have sweet chestnut coming out of our ears.

Invest in top tools. It becomes increasingly difficult to find good garden tools that fit nicely in your hand and are well balanced. Everyone will have their own preference, but make sure you have a good pair of secateurs, a good spade, a good fork and sharp handsaws.

Try something new from seed. I love browsing through seed and nursery catalogues, losing myself in plants, working out new combinations and dreaming of things to be – the most difficult part is imposing self-restraint. Look now for next year's new discovery.

PEAS &
BEANS
BEAN

MATT DEVINE / ALAMY

Don't forget to wrap up warm. Having grown up in a warm climate I need really good waterproofs and boots to face the hazards of foul weather. Make sure you are comfortable and cosy so you can concentrate on the work ahead without worrying about the cold. That way you'll be able to stay out longer and achieve more.

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Dung and dusted

The year may be nearing its end but there are still jobs in the garden – and now is the ideal time to prepare soil for spring with a liberal scattering of muck and potash

WORDS LIA LEENDERTZ ILLUSTRATION PETRA BÖRNER

Spread muck

We have a man we can call who will back his ancient and beautiful-under-the-grime Bedford truck down our allotment path, tip up the back, and deposit a ton or two of fabulous muck, roughly half and half, diagonally across the end of our plot, and the allotment path itself. Thirty pounds the poorer there follows a sweaty afternoon barrowing the miss-dropped stuff off the path before anyone wants to drive down it. We try to keep some of this back for future planting holes, but it very quickly all gets spread across the plot, slowly rendering the sticky clay malleable. This is the time to do it, when the weather is cool enough to make the sweaty work enjoyable and the worms have plenty of time to work it into the soil before planting time.

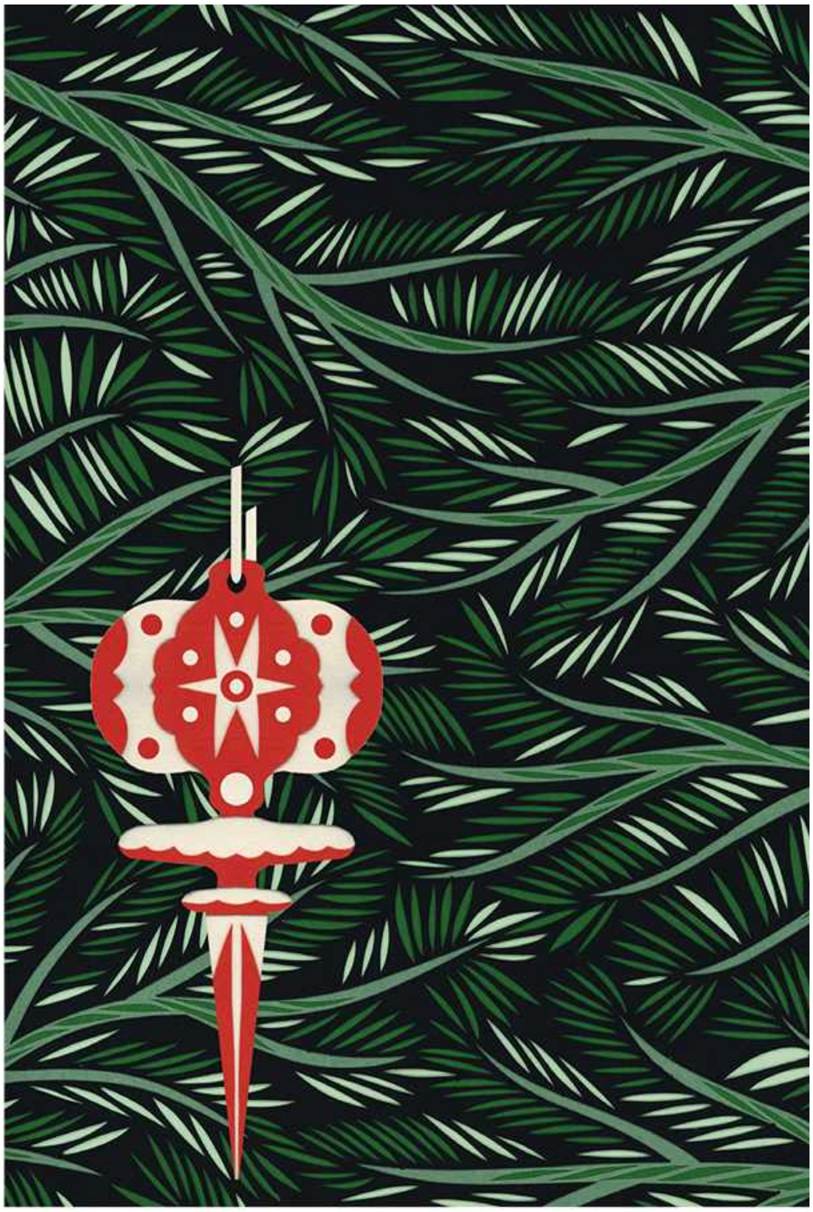
Make winter baskets

I should do this in late autumn but it is always Christmas looming that finally sends me to the garden centre for winter bedding. I want the garden to look homely and welcoming, not just the sitting room. Buy many plants and stuff them in close, as they will not be doing much growing. I like cyclamen, silvery cineraria and variegated ivy, but am wary of going too far down the festive road with reds, greens and silvers: there is a lot of winter left after Christmas Day when Christmassy swiftly loses its appeal. I like shocking pink cyclamen toned down by pretty purple and mauve violas.

Sprinkle ash

Not too much garden action now, it is December after all, and getting cosy next to the fire is high on the 'to do' list. Once the embers have died away I scoop the ash into a little metal bin and leave it to cool completely before taking it out to the garden. Don't do this if you include even a single piece of coal or smokeless fuel in your fire, but if you use only wood you can scatter the potash-rich ashes around plants that you want to flower and fruit. I mainly put them around my apple trees to ensure future bounty. □

This is the last of Lia's gardener's notes series. Next issue we welcome Jojo Tulloh as our gardener in the city.



Things to do

Prune grape vines before Christmas, or you risk pruning as the sap rises. Prune open-grown apple and pear trees too.

Open greenhouse vents a little on mild days, but make sure everything is closed up tight at night.

Pot up hippeastrum bulbs and get them started into growth for winter flowers.

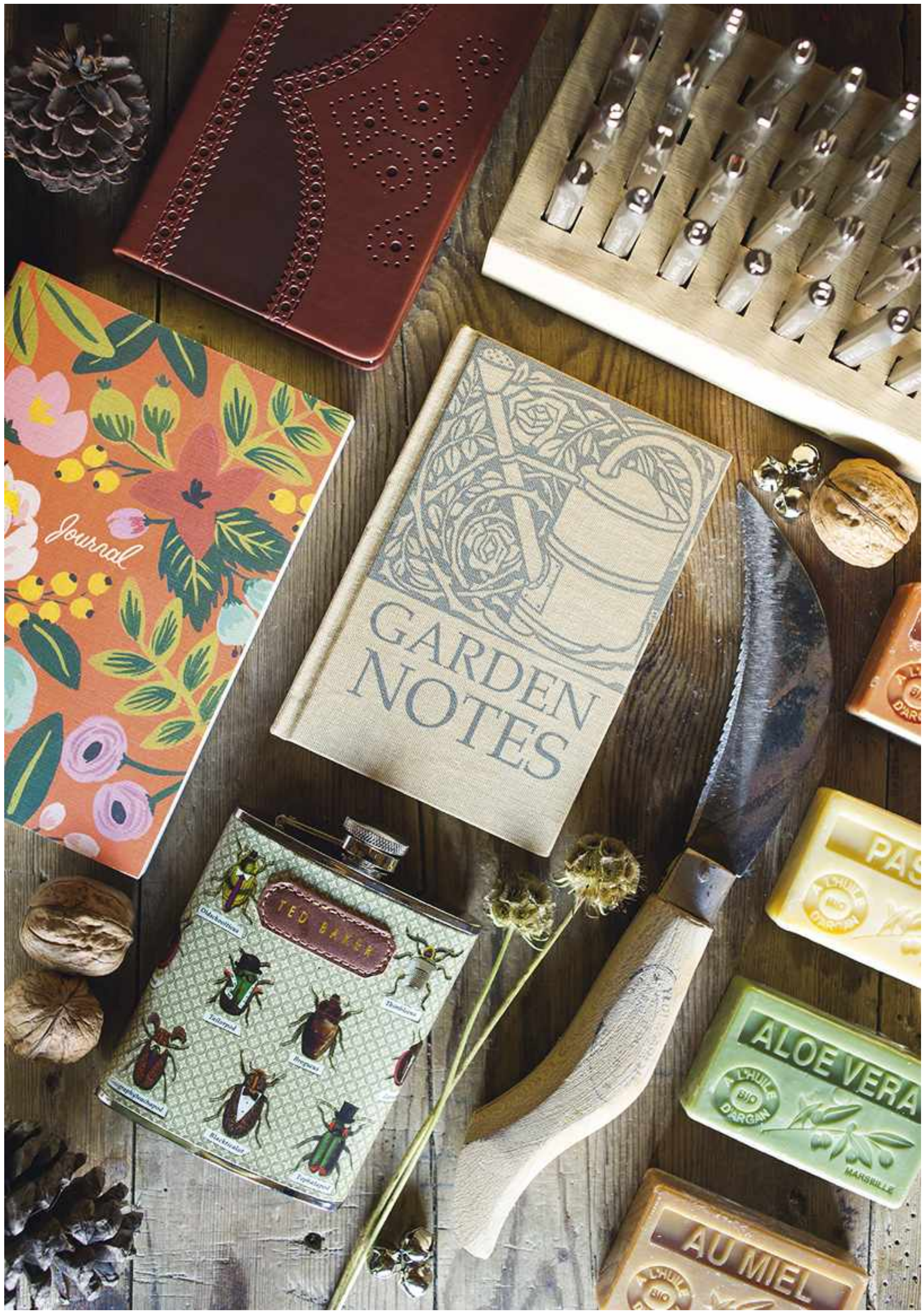
Remove fallen leaves from the surface of your pond.

Tie netting or fleece around berries that you want to bring in for Christmas decorations (but leave plenty for the birds).

Gifts for gardeners

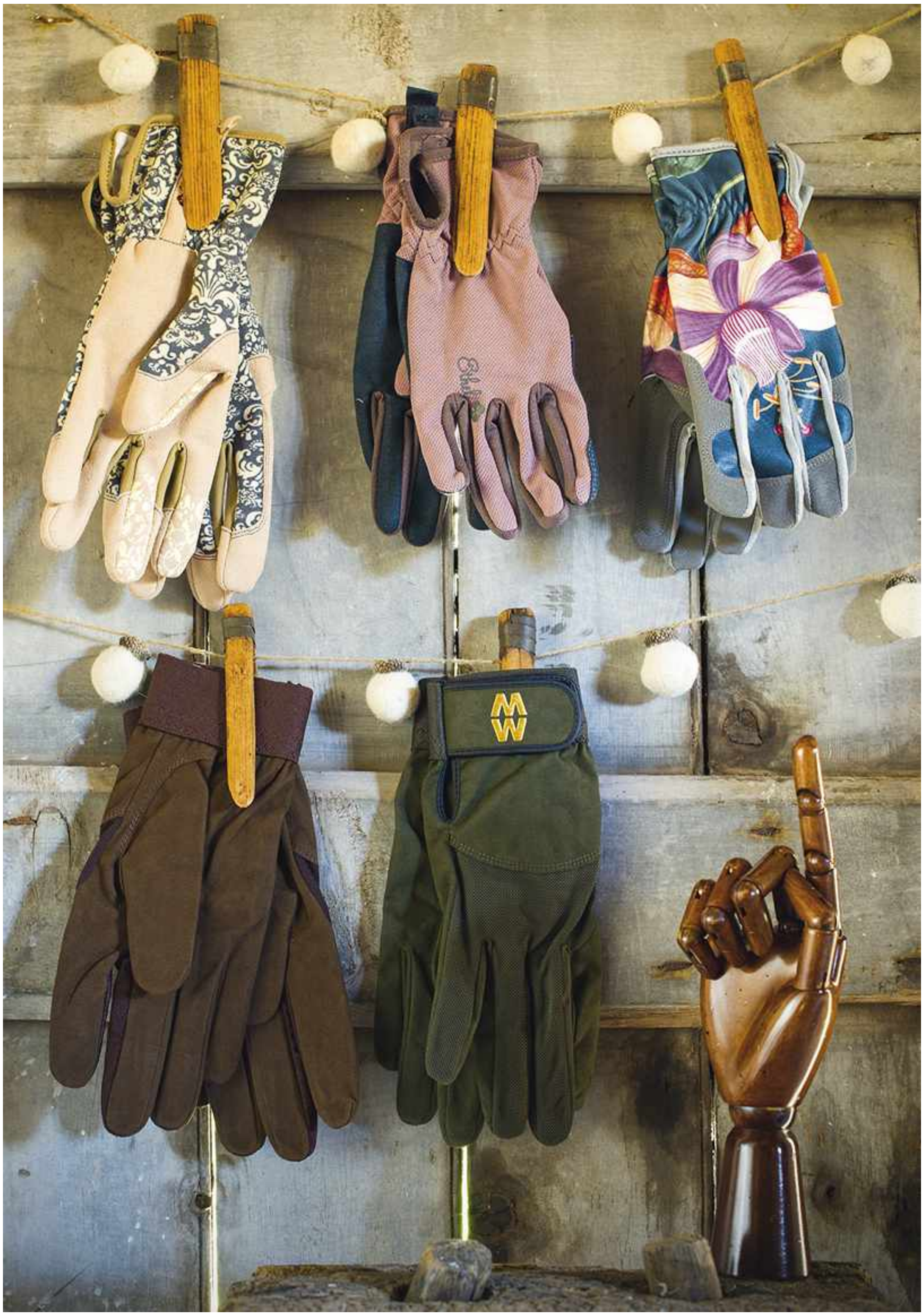
Our choice of beautiful present ideas are sure to light up Christmas morning for any garden enthusiast. Better start writing that list for Santa now

PHOTOGRAPHS **SEAN MALYON** STYLING **NIKI GOSS**



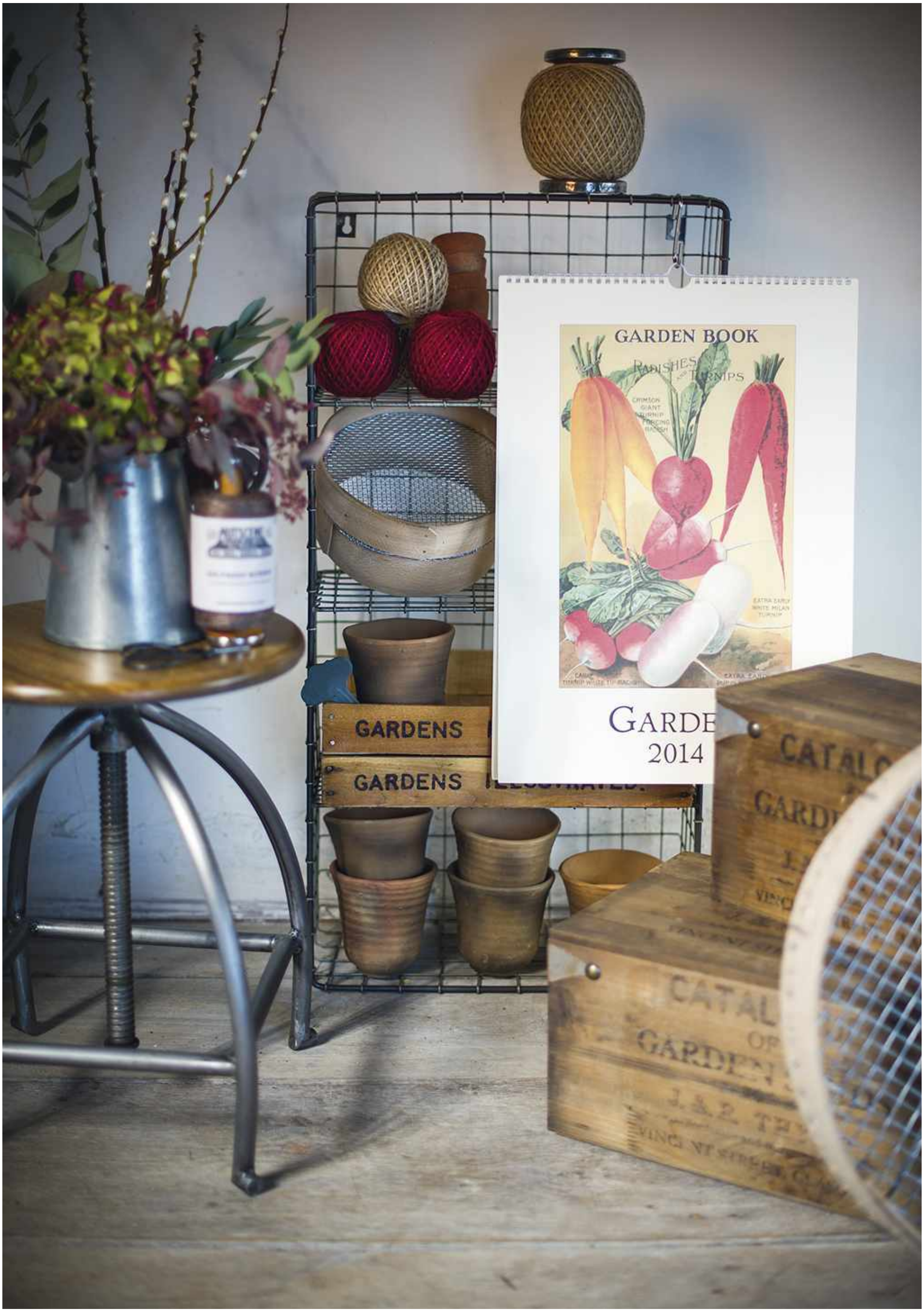
Opposite page Women's Irish wool **jacket** £112, short jute **apron** £38 and back-door **gardening bag** £16.50, all from Carrier Company. Three-quarter standard bay laurel **tree** (45cm head) £109.99, De Wit bow tine **rake** £39.99, De Wit 5 tine **hand rake** with short handle £25.99 and De Wit tulip **trowel** £29.99 (both in bag), all from Crocus. Indoor-outdoor **fairy lights** (in tree) – 200 warm white LED bulbs on 20m clear cable (requires three type D batteries) £35.99 from Lights4Fun. Bassano **planter**, made from iron with a mock-stone effect £40, or £144 for a set of three sizes (smallest size shown) from Garden Trading. St David's Cross 'ember' **throw** £165 and Multicheck 'spice' **throw** £115, both from Melin Tregwynt. Linen animals and dogs **cushions** £45 each from Indigo and Rose. Wanderlust gold **satchel** £39.95 from Wild & Wolf. Women's 'brown dog' ankle **boots** £34.95 and printed **wellies** in 'green fox' and 'navy dog' £39.95, all from Joules. Outwell gold hurricane **lantern** £7 from Go Outdoors. Hats and chair property of Allt-y-bela.

This page Ted Baker brown **brogue notebook** (small) £10.95 and Ted Baker beetle **hip flask** £24.95, both from Wild & Wolf. 5mm metal character **punches** (A-Z & 0-9) for aluminium plant labels £88.50, and wooden holding **box** £34, both from Alitags. 'Orange flower' **journal** by The Rifle Paper Company £12.50 from Willow & Stone. Hand-printed and bound 'garden notes' A6 **notebook** £10.50 from Second Time Books via Etsy. Turkish perennial **knife** with 13cm folding blade £10.50 from the Great Dixter Shop. French **soaps** made from Argan oil in 30 assorted fragrances £2.50 each from RE.



This page Top row, left to right: Blue and cream fleur-de-lis 'Jubilee' gardening **gloves** £13.50, and lightweight 'Plum' **gloves** £11.50, both from Ethel Gloves. RHS 'Passiflora' **gloves** featuring imagery from the RHS Lindley Library, £14.95 from Burgon & Ball. Bottom row: Long cuff 'Micro Mesh' **sports gloves**, designed for maximum grip in wet conditions, shown here in brown and green (also available in black, white, navy, and black and white), £27.99 from MacWet. Artist's wooden **hand model** £65 from The National Gallery Shop. Two-metre Elda felt **acorn garland** £26 from Rowen & Wren. Vintage wooden 'gypsy' **pegs** with metal bands to ends, £20 for a bundle of 11 from H is for Home.

Opposite page Industrial twist **stool**, with adjustable seat height between 45cm and 72cm £120, and four-shelf **wire rack** (78cm h x 39cm w x 20cm d, can be wall mounted) £60, both from Cox & Cox. Metal utensil **jug** (used as vase) £9.95 from Rockett St George. Heritage balls of **twine** (50m) in red and natural £2.05, salvaged **mill bobbin** with spool of brown twine and scissors (on stool) £20 and salvaged **mill bobbin** twine holder with ball of natural twine (on top of wire shelf) £27.50, all from Nutscene. Garden **riddles** – 8in diameter with 1/8in mesh £18, and 18in diameter with 1/4in mesh £28, both from Hen & Hammock. Personalised wooden **seed trays** £7 with up to 12 letters from Over The Garden Wall. Handmade **terracotta pots** £9.95 (for two) from Nkuku. Garden 2014 wall **calendar** by Cavallini & Co featuring vintage vegetable illustrations, £15.99 from Beautiful Notebooks. Wooden garden **seeds boxes** in two sizes £27 and £36 from Willow & Stone. Plant label and small pots (behind twine on shelf) stylist's own.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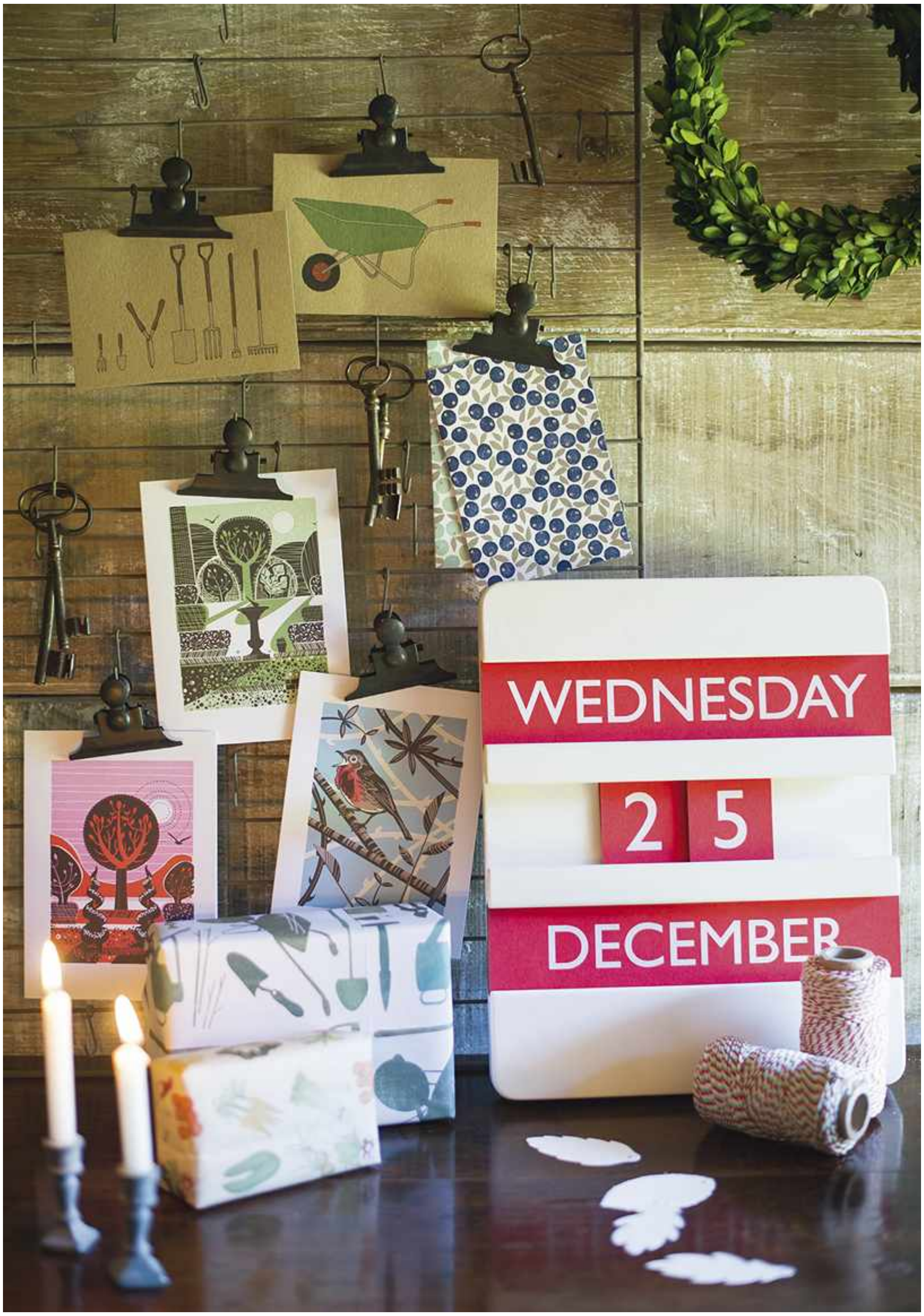

Opposite page Traditional wooden **toboggan** £59 and orange checked lambswool **blanket** (on top) £30, both from Hen & Hammock. (Other blankets by Melin Tregwynt, see page 22). Single oak seated rope **swing** (75cm x 25cm x 5cm) £229 uncarved or £329 carved with up to 20 letters; Dorset milking **stool** £269 carved with up to ten letters, both from Sitting Spiritually. Vintage orange tartan **flask** £12 from H is for Home. Feathered **robins** £8.50 for a set of eight from Cox & Cox. Snowy **illuminated tree** with 36 warm white LED lights (mains powered, for indoor and outdoor use) £27.95 from Lights4Fun. For similar kraft gift boxes try Paperchase. Plate and glass stylist's own.

This page Useful hooks **wall rack** (80cm h x 50cm w x 0.5cm d) £30 from Cox & Cox. Garden tools and wheelbarrow **cards** £2.50 each, and vegetable **gift wrap** set £7 by Kate Broughton. Winter berries hand-printed Christmas **cards** (pack of six in two colourways) £12 from Rowen & Wren. British birds and garden scenes **cards** £2.20 each and garden tool gift wrap £4.50 from Mac and Ninny. **Perpetual calendar** with bright red date cards £65 from Green & Blue. Candy stripe bakers' **twines** £6.50 each from Nutscene. Real *Buxus* Christmas **wreath** £58 for a set of three in different sizes, autumn leaves **gift tags** £12 for a box of 21 with twine, 'Miniature Mabel' small 6cm h **candlesticks** £11 for two, and mini **candles** £8 for 20, all from Rowen & Wren. Antiqued metal **bulldog clips** £3 from RE. Antique French **keys** (mixed sizes) £4.50-£6.50 from Dee Puddy.

Shot on location at Allt-y-bela, Monmouthshire with kind permission, alltybela.co.uk. **For all stockists details see page 102.**

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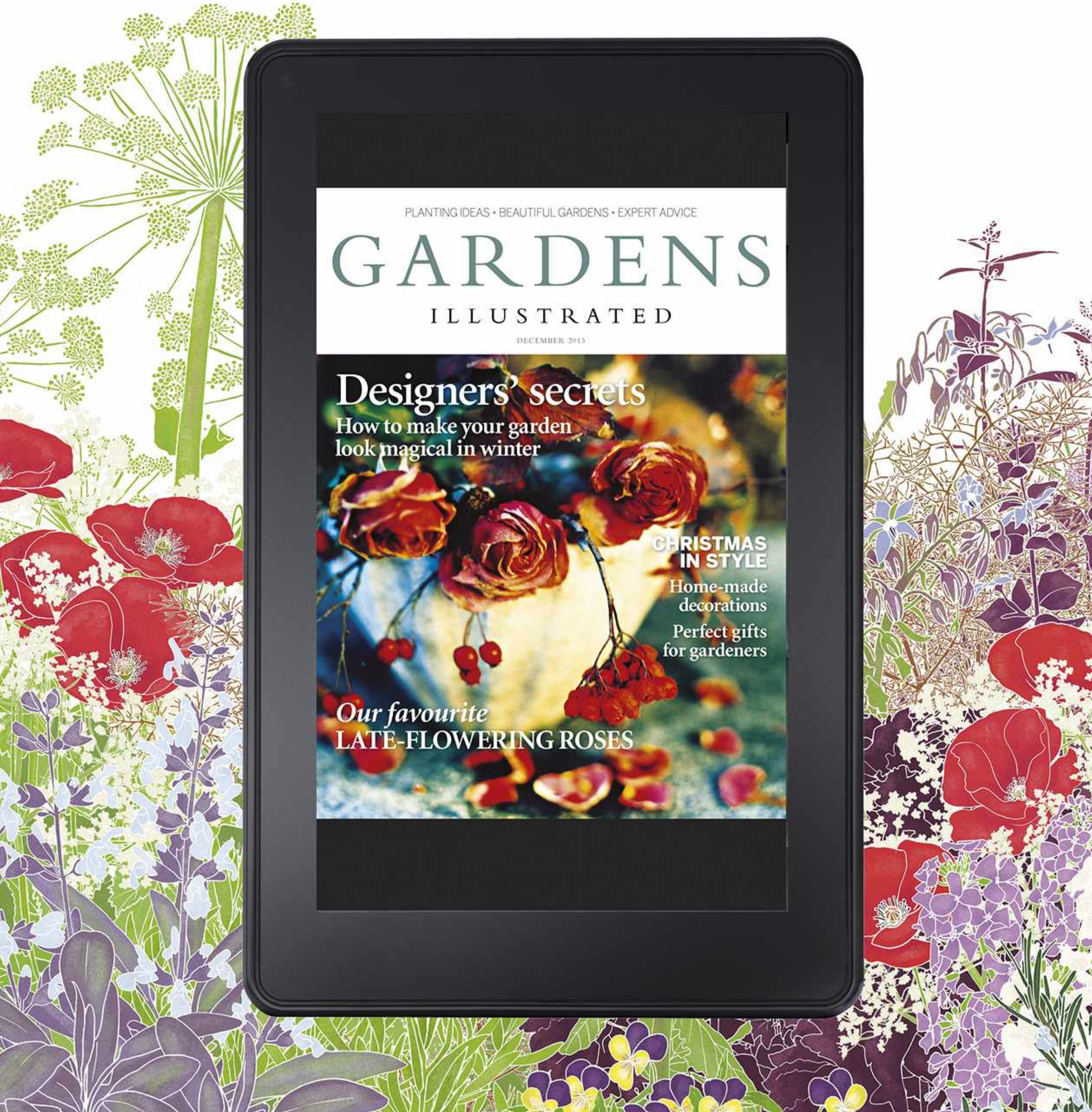
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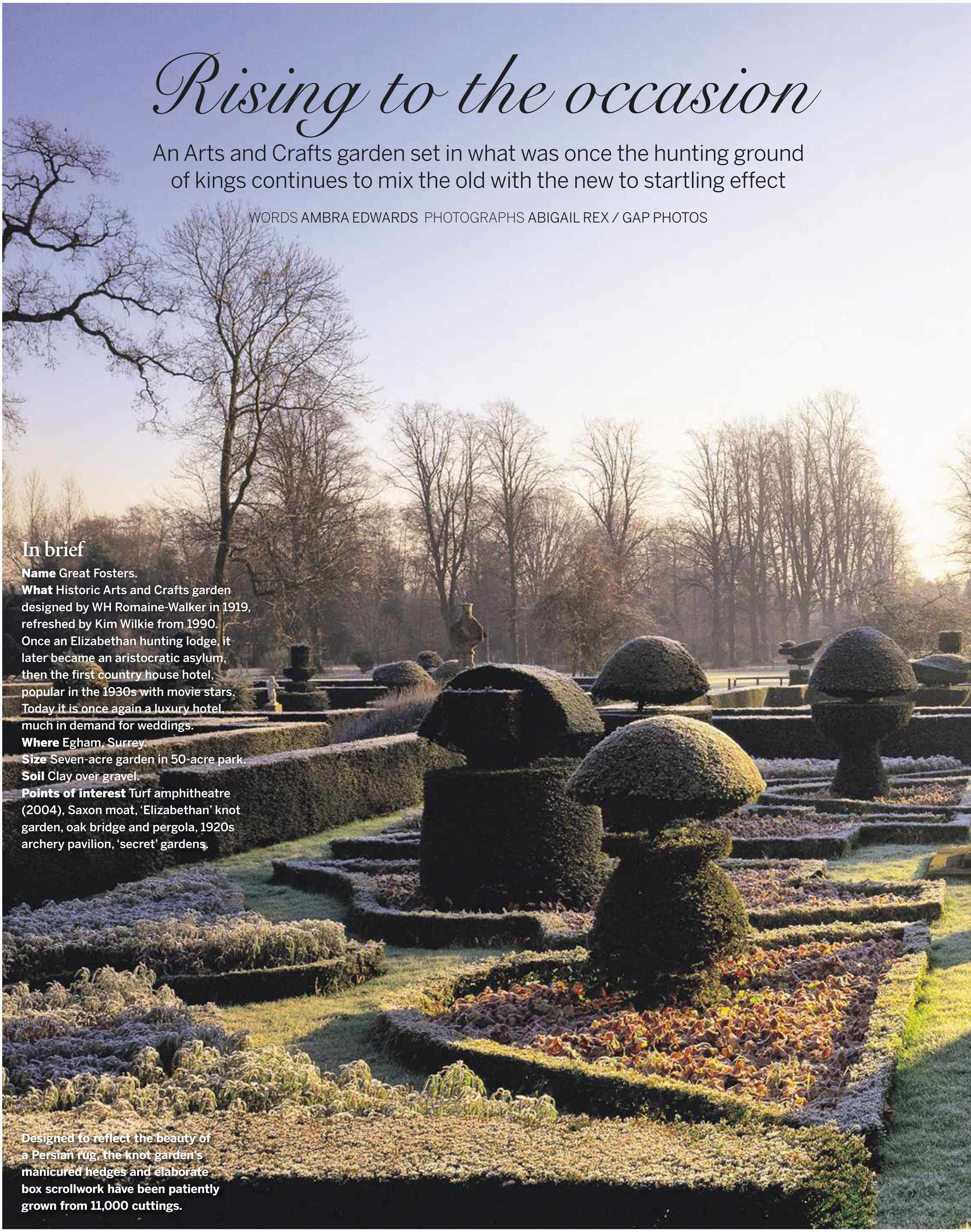


Rising to the occasion

An Arts and Crafts garden set in what was once the hunting ground of kings continues to mix the old with the new to startling effect

WORDS AMBRA EDWARDS PHOTOGRAPHS ABIGAIL REX / GAP PHOTOS

In brief

Name Great Fosters.
What Historic Arts and Crafts garden designed by WH Romaine-Walker in 1919, refreshed by Kim Wilkie from 1990. Once an Elizabethan hunting lodge, it later became an aristocratic asylum, then the first country house hotel, popular in the 1930s with movie stars. Today it is once again a luxury hotel, much in demand for weddings.
Where Egham, Surrey.
Size Seven-acre garden in 50-acre park.
Soil Clay over gravel.
Points of interest Turf amphitheatre (2004), Saxon moat, 'Elizabethan' knot garden, oak bridge and pergola, 1920s archery pavilion, 'secret' gardens.

Designed to reflect the beauty of a Persian rug, the knot garden's manicured hedges and elaborate box scrollwork have been patiently grown from 11,000 cuttings.

Russell and his team flit through the landscape as invisibly as fairies, striving to maintain an immaculate standard

As Russell Dixon watches the winter sun rise over Great Fosters, gilding the willows, transforming the surface of lake and moat into a sea of liquid silver, he cannot conceal a little shrug of disappointment.

He was hoping for an overcast morning, even rain. He can get so much more done on an inclement day. For this tall-chimneyed Elizabethan manor, set in 50 acres of Surrey parkland, is now a luxury hotel, where head gardener Russell and his team flit through the landscape as silently and invisibly as fairies, striving to maintain an intricate Arts and Crafts garden to an immaculate standard. That's no easy task, especially in high summer, when the hedges and topiary need trimming and grass needs endless cutting – just at the moment when guests want to linger on the terrace.

"We can't cut before 8.30am, in case they're asleep, and if it's nice weather, they may well take breakfast on the terrace. We have a window between 11am and 12.30pm, when they've finished coffee and before lunch, when we cut like mad. Mostly we work in the rain, when there's no one on the terrace. It's not ideal."

Letting things get shaggy is not an option. "There are weddings here every day in summer. Leave a messy bit of hedge sticking out, and you will certainly annoy some bride's mother!"

Today, though, a guest rising early and looking out from the mullioned windows over the Saxon moat to a stately avenue of limes and misty oak pasture, might easily imagine any forthcoming nuptials to be those of Anne Boleyn. In those days, Great Fosters formed part of Windsor Great Park, and Henry VIII rode out from here to hunt, as later did his daughter Elizabeth I.

This morning there are hunters of another kind – the heron perched intently on the bank, a red kite wheeling lazily over the woodland. For a moment or two the 21st century is held at bay – an illusion all the more remarkable because the usual occupants of the sky over this part of Surrey are not raptors but Jumbo jets, and just at the end of the avenue, miraculously concealed from view, lies the hellish stink and thunder of the M25.

This illusion is the achievement of that incomparable magician of landscape, Kim Wilkie, called in to revive the ravaged

Continued on page 36 ▷

Kim's plan was not only to shield the house from noise and fumes, but also to invoke once more the spirit of the great hunting park that once surrounded the house, and to give breathing space to the reinvigorated formal garden. This stands on a moated island, no longer linked to the main avenue, so that access to the rest of the garden requires a tantalising detour over a bridge to one side. An elegant construction of silvery oak, entwined with *Wisteria sinensis*, the bridge becomes an arresting architectural feature in the winter garden.

Maintaining year-round interest

Great Fosters hosts weddings and celebrations right through the year, so it's essential that the garden should look as good in winter as it does in summer; it's the backdrop for so many photographs. "We plant for longevity of interest," says Russell, "thinking about evergreen foliage, stem colour, and the architecture of the plants, all that remains after the flowers die down. And of course winter is the time when the topiary and the shapes of the hedges really come into their own." Without the distraction of colour, the simplest effects can be the most telling – a rhythmic line of crisp yew domes, or the stripes rolled into a perfect circle of turf in the entrance courtyard – even when the grass no longer needs cutting.

It's also the time when the setting of the garden becomes especially important: the silhouettes of oaks and limes against the low winter light, which also shows off the amphitheatre to best advantage.

But the principal delight of the winter garden is the marvellous Arts and Crafts hard landscaping – bridges and pergolas, rose arches and statuary and the enchanting thatched archery pavilion.

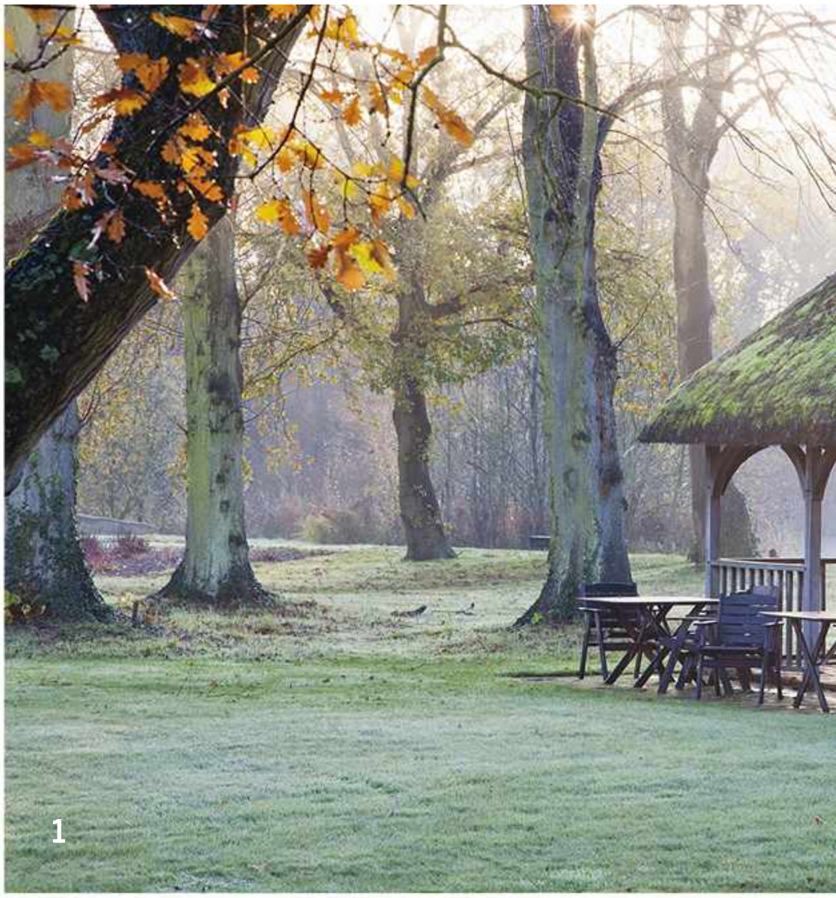
Hard landscaping at Great Fosters

1 Pavilion
The rustic thatched pavilion on the far side of the moat dates from the 1920s, built for the then-fashionable sport of archery. Now it is a delightful place to have tea in the summer, and an inviting destination even on the coldest winter day.

2 Pergola
As the garden dies back, vertical interest is all the more important – as in this handsome pergola flanking the moat. Evergreen euphorbias and clipped mounds of lavender, rosemary and *Santolina* provide interest at ground level.

3 Rose arches
Rose arches encircle a round pool, creating a formal, well-defined space, wonderfully romantic when the old roses bloom in summer, but equally pleasing in skeletal winter form. This recalls the original brief for the garden, in 1918, which was to 're-establish the old-world charm of the place and create a garden that would be attractive all year'.

4 Amphitheatre
As the sun lowers in the sky, the sculpted terraces of Kim's amphitheatre provide an ever more powerful focus in the garden. The manipulation of space is masterful: from the periphery of the garden, the house looks miraculously distant.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Intimate enclosures lure guests to explore beyond the central knot garden

▷ garden in 1990. In 1971, the M25 had ripped through the site, truncating the central axis of a formal garden plan, and exposing the house to the noise and fumes of the motorway. The great storms of 1989 had wrought further havoc. Following 14 years of quietly persistent negotiation with the Department for Transport, and acquisition of the neighbouring fields, a half-mile long earthwork was constructed, hiding the road and allowing the creation of a 6m-high grass amphitheatre as a new focal point for the garden. A lake was dug, the excavated gravel sold off to fund the new works; Russell chopped down a plantation of 450 Christmas trees in the space of week; and over time, degraded fields abutting the motorway rediscovered their former dignity as water-meadows.

"We needed sufficient different spaces to be used in different ways," explains Kim, "from birthday parties to weddings to exhibitions to performances – which could all be relatively separate and private, and yet, somehow, still hang together as a whole." The Arts and Crafts style of hedged compartments proved ideal for the task: "It allowed the historic bits to retain their integrity, but also makes a rather good framework for new gardens, small 'secret' gardens where guests could party, or where you could just sit peacefully by yourself."

A slate-paved iris garden, a scooped enclosure rustling with bamboos, a smooth turf mount, or a miniature wild-flower meadow concealed between crinkle-crankle hedges – these intimate enclosures lure guests to explore beyond the central 'Elizabethan' knot garden engirdled by the moat – all scrolling box and whimsical topiary peacocks, typical of the 1920s' love affair with medievalism. Russell loves these new spaces, for the variety and surprise they bring to the garden. Better still, they give his invisible gardeners so many places to hide. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Great Fosters, Stroude Road,
Egham, Surrey TW20 9UR.
Tel 01784 433822.
Website greatfosters.co.uk

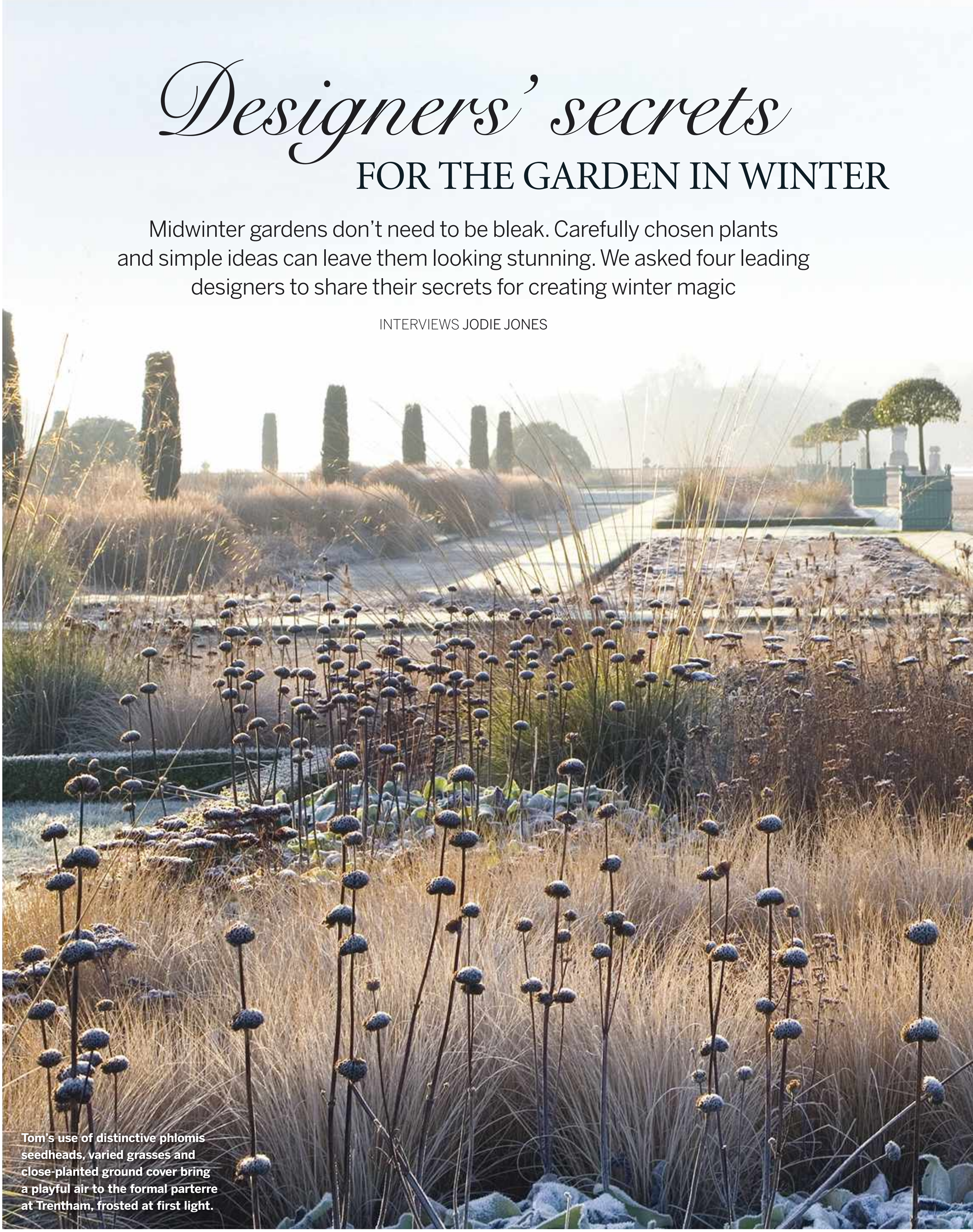
Creating a splendid backdrop to the hotel, the knot garden takes centre stage during the winter months. At its centre is a sundial that's believed to date from 1585 and to have been have been a gift from Sir Francis Drake.

Designers' secrets

FOR THE GARDEN IN WINTER

Midwinter gardens don't need to be bleak. Carefully chosen plants and simple ideas can leave them looking stunning. We asked four leading designers to share their secrets for creating winter magic

INTERVIEWS JODIE JONES



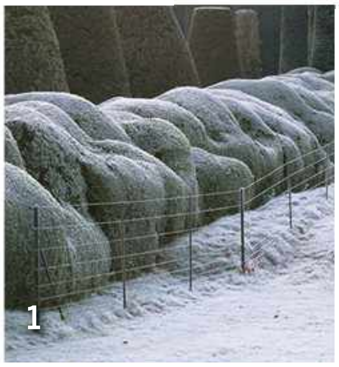
Tom's use of distinctive phlomis seedheads, varied grasses and close-planted ground cover bring a playful air to the formal parterre at Trentham, frosted at first light.

Tom Stuart-Smith

Sometimes the very deathly aspect of winter can be most dramatic, in a Miss Havisham sort of way. I love large country gardens where you leave everything to gently subside, echoing the gentle decay of the surrounding landscape. That is what happens at Trentham (pictured here), which I feel has a certain heroic abandon, with dead things everywhere. In fact I think some of these big gardens are at their best in winter, when they are semi-undressed and you can really appreciate their design.

But in an urban setting the requirements are a little different. In city gardens you need plants that look good all year round, which generally means a more evergreen planting palette. There is a little garden I created in Islington, filled with tree ferns, box balls and *Hakonechloa macra*, which retains its impact all through the winter. We really just leave it alone, then cut the *Hakonechloa* back immediately before the snowdrops flower, and it looks wonderful.

LEFT: JANE SEBIRE; 1 CLIVE NICHOLS; 2 & 3 GAP PHOTOS / NICOLA BROWNE & JAN SMITH; 4 MARIANNE MAJERUS. DESIGN: TOM STUART-SMITH



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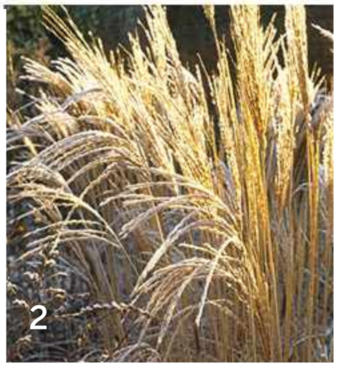

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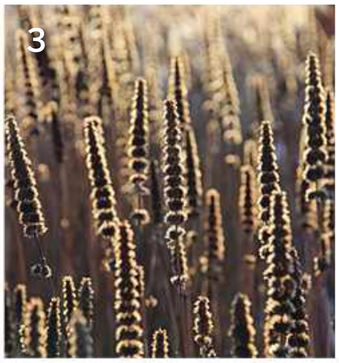

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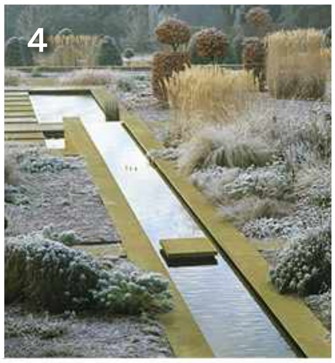

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Design tips

- Hang on to things in varying states of naturalism, from the formal through to the naturalistic. In winter those different layers become more apparent and add depth to the overall picture.
- Clipped evergreens make a tremendous contribution to any garden in winter, but that doesn't mean you have to stick to solid, formal shapes. Cloud pruning **(1)** is a tremendously expressive alternative that has a nuanced interaction with varying light levels or frosting.
- Water is fantastic in winter gardens **(4)**, especially if the aspect is northerly. A sheet of still water brings light into the garden like nothing else can. I often incorporate water into urban courtyards and if you can position it to catch the early morning light the impact is like switching on a light.

Plants for winter

I often create schemes that are about 25 per cent grasses, and provided you stick with reliable forms, such as *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' **(2)** or *Hakonechloa macra,* they will stand well through winter. I also value all *Veronicastrum* for their wonderful seedheads **(3)**, and since the spread of box blight I am increasingly using *Pittosporum tobira* 'Nanum' as a topiary alternative in gardens that don't get too cold. But this is also the time of year when trees really prove their worth. I rate the Lucombe oak, *Quercus* x *hispanica* 'Lucombeana', which has foliage slightly lighter than its cousins and holds its leaves through winter, but *Maytenus boaria* is probably my favourite small evergreen, delicate and willowy, it would work well in many gardens.

What I'll be doing this winter

After 20 years in our garden, this will be the first winter when I am not planning a big planting project. Now I need to focus on looking after what I've got, and pulling out those thugs that went in during the early years and are now rampaging out of control – laurels, white willowherb, comfrey and variegated ground elder. I will be chucking things out by the lorry load. Literally.

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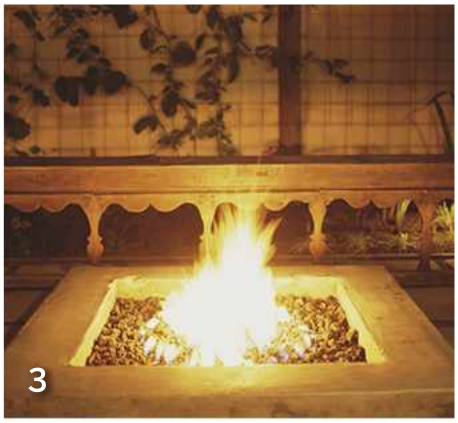
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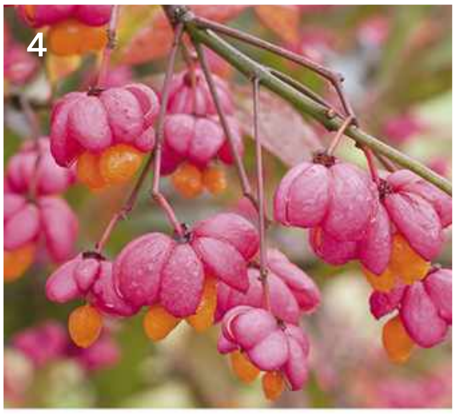
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Ann-Marie Powell

The light is wonderful in winter. Moments seem to become frozen in time when they are caught in a rare beam of low, slanting sunshine. Gardens are really all about light and shade at any time of year, but that is never so apparent as it is in winter.

I always think this is the time for going on lovely long, chilly walks through the woods, and in the gardens I design I always try to inject a bit of that atmosphere. I know a lot of people are scared of putting groups of trees together, but you don't need a massive garden to get away with it. In fact, even in a tiny garden, you can get very close to creating that atmosphere by planting one beautiful multi-stemmed birch, *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii* (pictured opposite).

Whatever the scale of the garden, it is important that you can see that 'woodland' from the back door – you need something to draw your eye over to yonder views. This is what I have done in the garden I have created over the past ten years at Durford Wood. There I spent a lot of time thinking about the views beyond the boundary and how I could 'bring in' trees from the wider landscape. It is an important principle at any time of year but in winter, when the skeletal branches make such delicate patterns, it really comes into its own.

Design tips

- You need permanent structures in the garden. Sculpture can be expensive, but if you put your money into really good quality furniture you get something beautiful and practical as well. You could go for a classic wooden bench, but I love Fermob (fermob.com/en) garden furniture **(5)**, which comes in an amazing range of great colours. You can find a good range at Barbed (barbed.co.uk).
- I love to have my firepit going in winter **(3)**. If you light one while you're having a party, it will soon tempt people from the house.
- Lighting is incredibly valuable at this time of year, even if you're just looking at the garden through your living-room window **(1)**. I have a load of copper burners on spikes – you just fill them up with lamp oil, adjust the wick, and they go on for hours.

Plants for winter

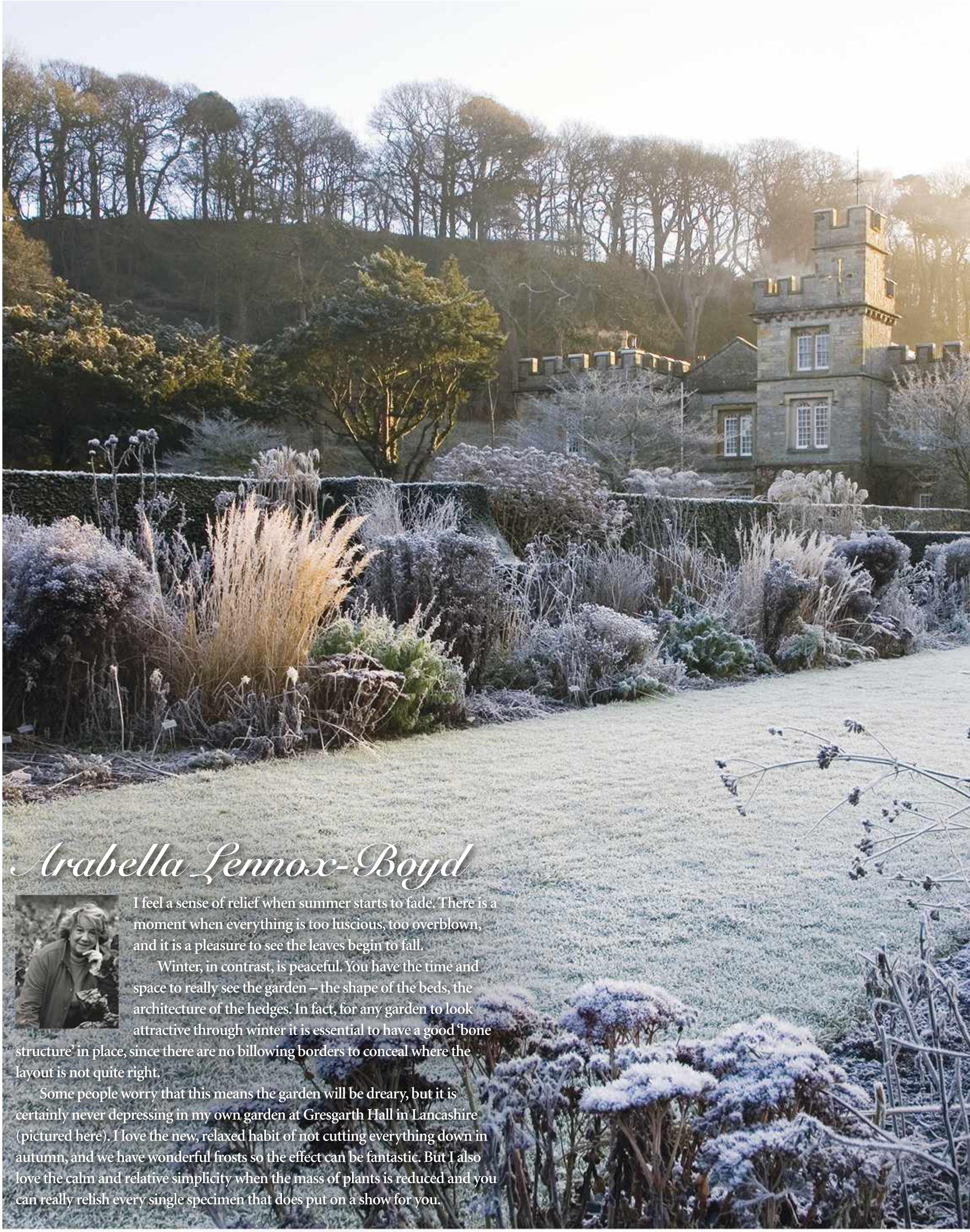
You've got to have scent, and I love the loquat, *Eriobotrya japonica*, which has flowers that have a beautiful vanilla fragrance and a funky urban jungle look. Fruit is also a real draw at this time of year. My first choice would always be *Rosa rugosa* **(2)** – massive hips the size of cherry tomatoes, which are great for birds and look fantastic in a mixed hedge – but also *Malus hupehensis* **(6)**, or almost any of the other crab apples. And I do like to have a great big wallop of colour. My top pick this year is a new hellebore cultivar, 'Blue Metallic Lady', which has amazing, iridescent, dark-purple flowers. But one of my all-time favourites is *Euonymus europaeus* 'Red Cascade' **(4)**, an easy-to-grow native plant with really tarty pink seed cases holding stunning but poisonous, bright-orange berries – a total taste bypass!

What I'll be doing this winter

My mother-in-law has filled our garden with bird feeders (15 at the last count), so I will watch the birds, have a fire and build a den with the kids. But what I really like is just going out there and being, not doing.

Multi-stemmed trees can give the sense of a woodland even in a small garden and create wonderful winter silhouettes.

1 JONATHAN BUCKLEY / THE GARDEN COLLECTION; 2, 4 & 6 GAP PHOTOS / LYNN KEDDIE, ELKE BORKOWSKI & CLIVE NICHOLS; 3 RAY KACHATORIAN / GETTY; 5 JEAN MARC PALISSE; RIGHT: MARIANNE MAJERUS, THE HIGH LINE, NEW YORK, DESIGN: PIET OUDOLF



Arabella Lennox-Boyd

I feel a sense of relief when summer starts to fade. There is a moment when everything is too luscious, too overblown, and it is a pleasure to see the leaves begin to fall.

Winter, in contrast, is peaceful. You have the time and space to really see the garden – the shape of the beds, the architecture of the hedges. In fact, for any garden to look attractive through winter it is essential to have a good 'bone structure' in place, since there are no billowing borders to conceal where the layout is not quite right.

Some people worry that this means the garden will be dreary, but it is certainly never depressing in my own garden at Gresgarth Hall in Lancashire (pictured here). I love the new, relaxed habit of not cutting everything down in autumn, and we have wonderful frosts so the effect can be fantastic. But I also love the calm and relative simplicity when the mass of plants is reduced and you can really relish every single specimen that does put on a show for you.

Arabella's expert eye for structure ensures the herbaceous borders at Gresgarth Hall retain their interest throughout winter.

LEFT: JANE SEBIRE; 1, 2 & 3 MATT ANKER, KEITH BURDETT & HOWARD RICE / GAP PHOTOS; 4 PLANTOGRAPHY / ALAMY

Design tips

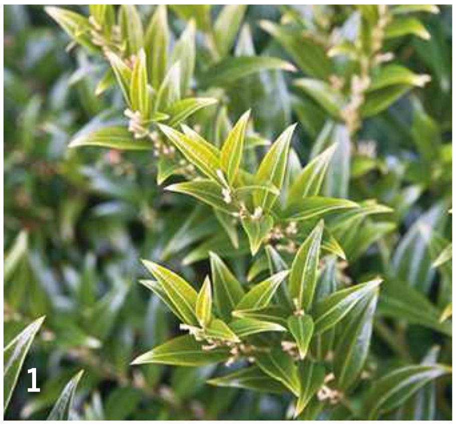
- It is important to get the architecture of the garden just right. I do not mean only the hard landscaping but also the careful pruning of trees to enhance their natural shapes, as well as yew hedges and topiary balls **(3)**. You will be amazed at what a difference that can make.
- Colour is invaluable, and it doesn't have to come just from plants. I have a wooden bridge at Gresgarth painted in a very jolly shade of red, which really cheers the garden up in winter. In a smaller garden you might paint the tool shed or even just a chair.
- Garden sculpture is so important. We have some wonderful pieces at Gresgarth, but I also get great pleasure from the shape of my terracotta plant pots wrapped in hessian **(2)** to protect them from frost. Even a well-trained rose can have a sculptural quality in winter.

Plants for winter

You do not need to chase after strong colours, although I have closely planted a great mass of hamamelis, mainly the cultivars 'Diane', 'Harry' and 'Pallida', so their red, orange and pale yellow flowers intermingle wonderfully. But I am equally thrilled by simple pussy willow catkins and carpets of snowdrops. I have some good early flowering cherries, *Prunus incisa* 'Praecox' **(1)**, which even in Lancashire, are covered in white blossom in January. And I am mad about *Daphne bholua* **(4)** – I raised 50 from seed and have planted them together in a grove and their fragrance travels miles.

What I'll be doing this winter

I will continue to plant my developing arboretum. I have lots of lovely oaks, sorbus, prunus, euonymus and birch, all raised from seed I collected in Japan in 2009, which are ready to go out. But this winter will mainly be devoted to putting in drains. After the terrible rains of the past few years our soil has become dreadfully compacted in several areas and I am starting to lose plants.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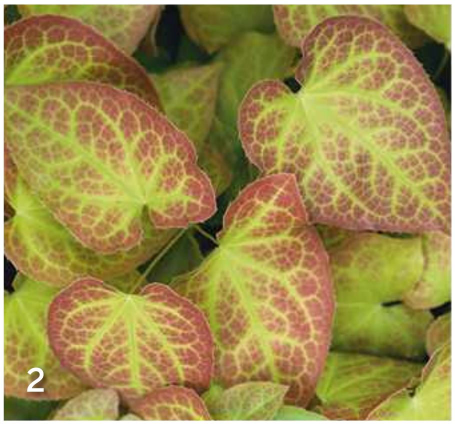
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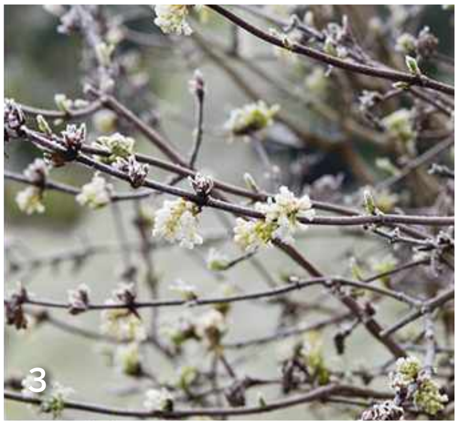
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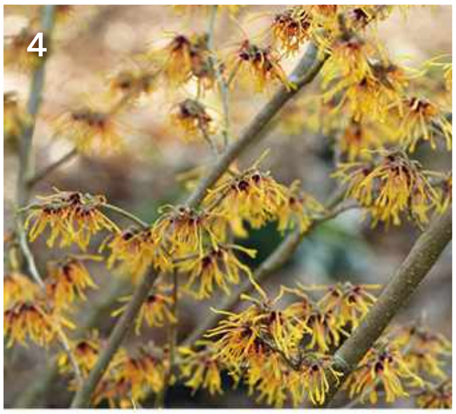
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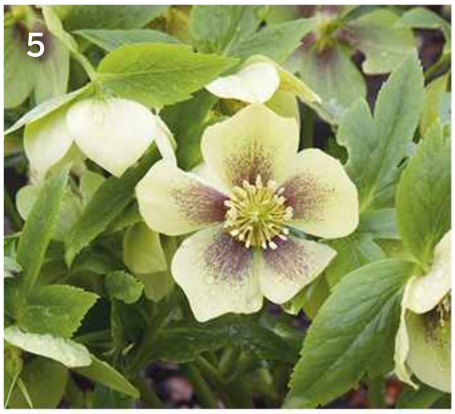
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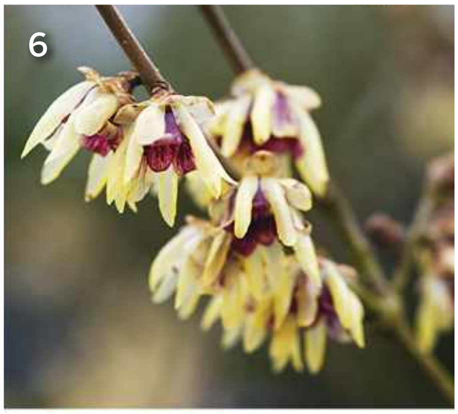
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Dan Pearson

Winter gives you an opportunity to look at everything in a new light. It is so much easier to assess form and structure at this time of year.

I consider it is a rich time precisely because it is spartan. I particularly like deciduous spaces – the skeletons of trees and shrubs that are left behind, the patterns of light and shade on the ground.

One of the biggest challenges is remembering to leave room for things to shine in winter. I now devote between a quarter and a third of any space to winter interest. In a small garden this may just mean one specimen – say a hamamelis, or something with interesting stems – with complementary ground cover.

The importance of ground-cover evergreens is often hugely underestimated. There are lots of marvellous things, such as epimediums, which are seen as plants for spring interest, but look wonderful in winter.

The Friends of Battersea Park commissioned me to create a whole 1.6-acre Winter Garden, which is designed to be of greatest interest between leaf drop and bud burst. Most of the ground is covered with *Iris lazica*, luzulas, wild strawberries and hellebores **(5)**. There are sarcococcas and mahonias, viburnum and hamamelis. And we cleared and gravelled under an existing stand of *Parrotia persica* so their striking trunks are in focus. Throughout the garden the emphasis is on subtleties in colour and form, with highlights of floral interest.

Design tips

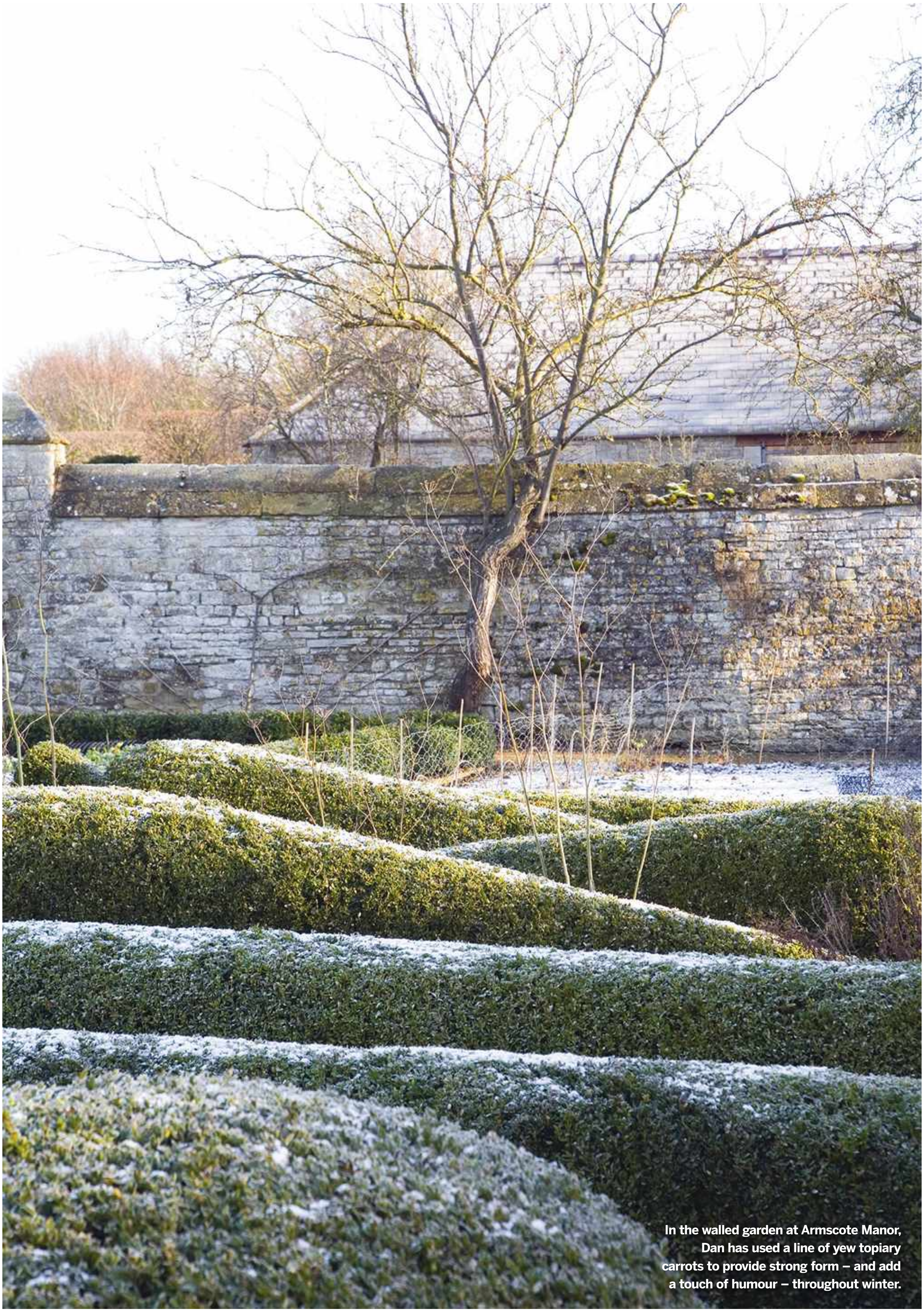
- Understand where the sun falls in the dark months. Even if it is only for an hour in the morning, that is where you'll want to be on a January day. Put a bench there and it becomes the focus for a grouping of plants.
- Make sure you plant combinations of winter-interest plants, not just single specimens. Under *Hamamelis* x *intermedia* 'Jelena', I might plant *Tellima grandiflora* 'Purpurea' to explore that copper-on-copper tone, with the large, lilac-flowered *Crocus tommasinianus* intensifying the effect. Layering is key – that is where the interest lies.
- Winter stems are better when the light shines on, rather than through them. *Cornus alba* 'Sibirica' or *Cornus stolonifera* will glow much more brightly if you position them where the light can fall directly on to them.

Plants for winter

Ground cover is important but often overlooked. I use alpine strawberries, *Epimedium* **(2)** and *Iris lazica*. Fragrance is a real joy in winter. I love wintersweet, *Chimonanthus praecox* **(6)**. It has a quiet beauty and a branch picked for the house will perfume a whole room. *Viburnums* are also wonderful. *Viburnum farreri* 'Candidissimum' **(3)** is the best white-flowered form. *Hamamelis* x *intermedia* in its various coppery forms – 'Jelena', 'Diane' and 'Aurora' **(4)** – is beautiful, delicately perfumed and hugely adaptable. Winter-flowering box is another good choice, especially *Sarcococca ruscifolia* var. *chinensis* 'Dragon Gate' **(1)**. This is a shade-tolerant, fine-leaved form, collected by Roy Lancaster, which starts flowering in December and goes on to the end of February, with a perfume that is magical.

What I'll be doing this winter

After my third winter in Somerset, I've started my garden properly. The site was very sloping, so we had to do a lot of work to level it, put in raised beds and drainage. Planting has been stalled by the weather but I am content to wait. There is no advantage to rushing things.



In the walled garden at Armscote Manor, Dan has used a line of yew topiary carrots to provide strong form – and add a touch of humour – throughout winter.

1 & 2 ALAMY / SHARON PEARSON & REX RICHARDSON; 3, 4, 5 & 6 GAP PHOTOS / ZARA NAPIER, FHF GREENMEDIA, MICHAEL HOWES & VICTORIA FIRMSTON; RIGHT: JANE SEBIRE

Nigella studded star

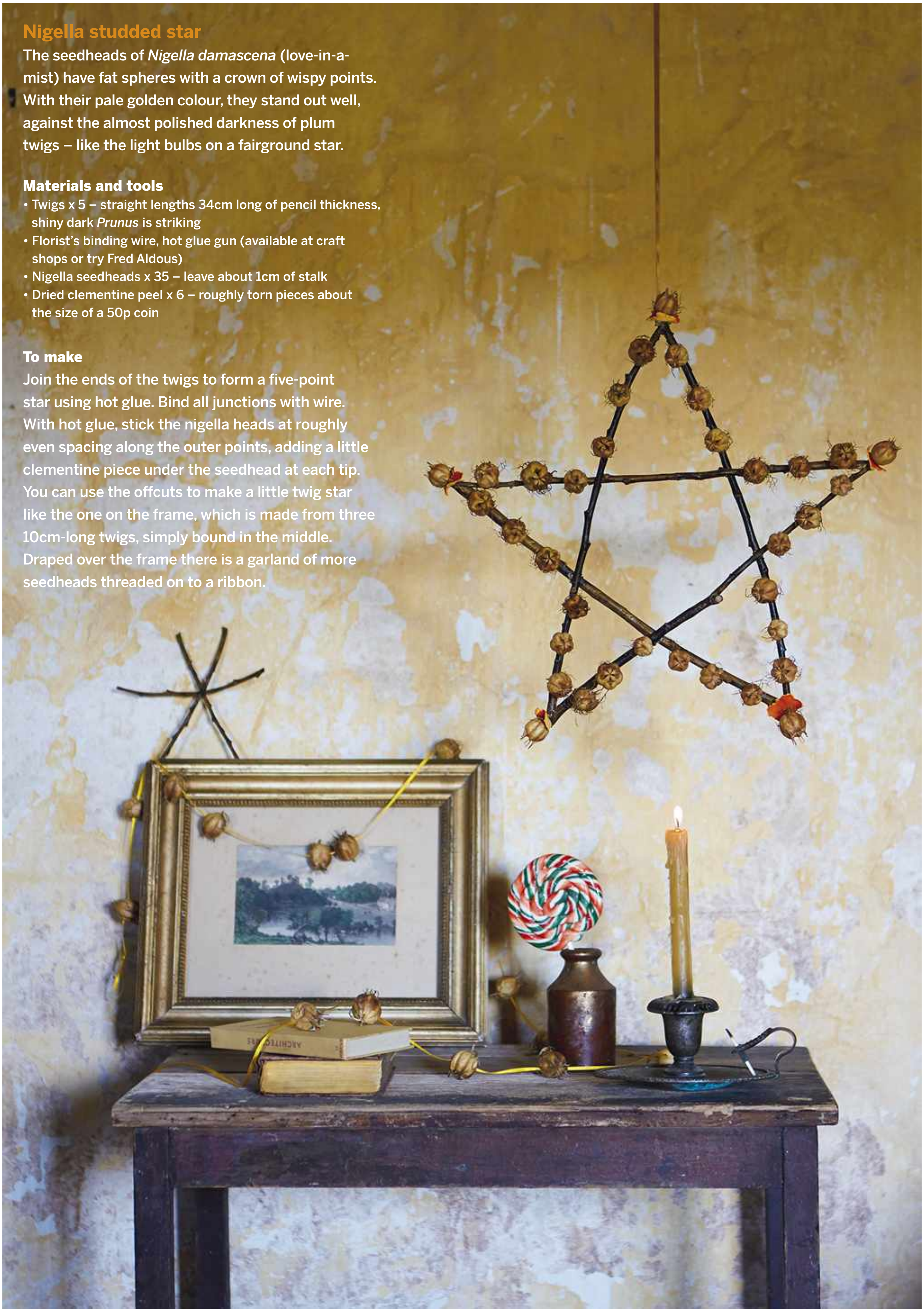
The seedheads of *Nigella damascena* (love-in-a-mist) have fat spheres with a crown of wispy points. With their pale golden colour, they stand out well, against the almost polished darkness of plum twigs – like the light bulbs on a fairground star.

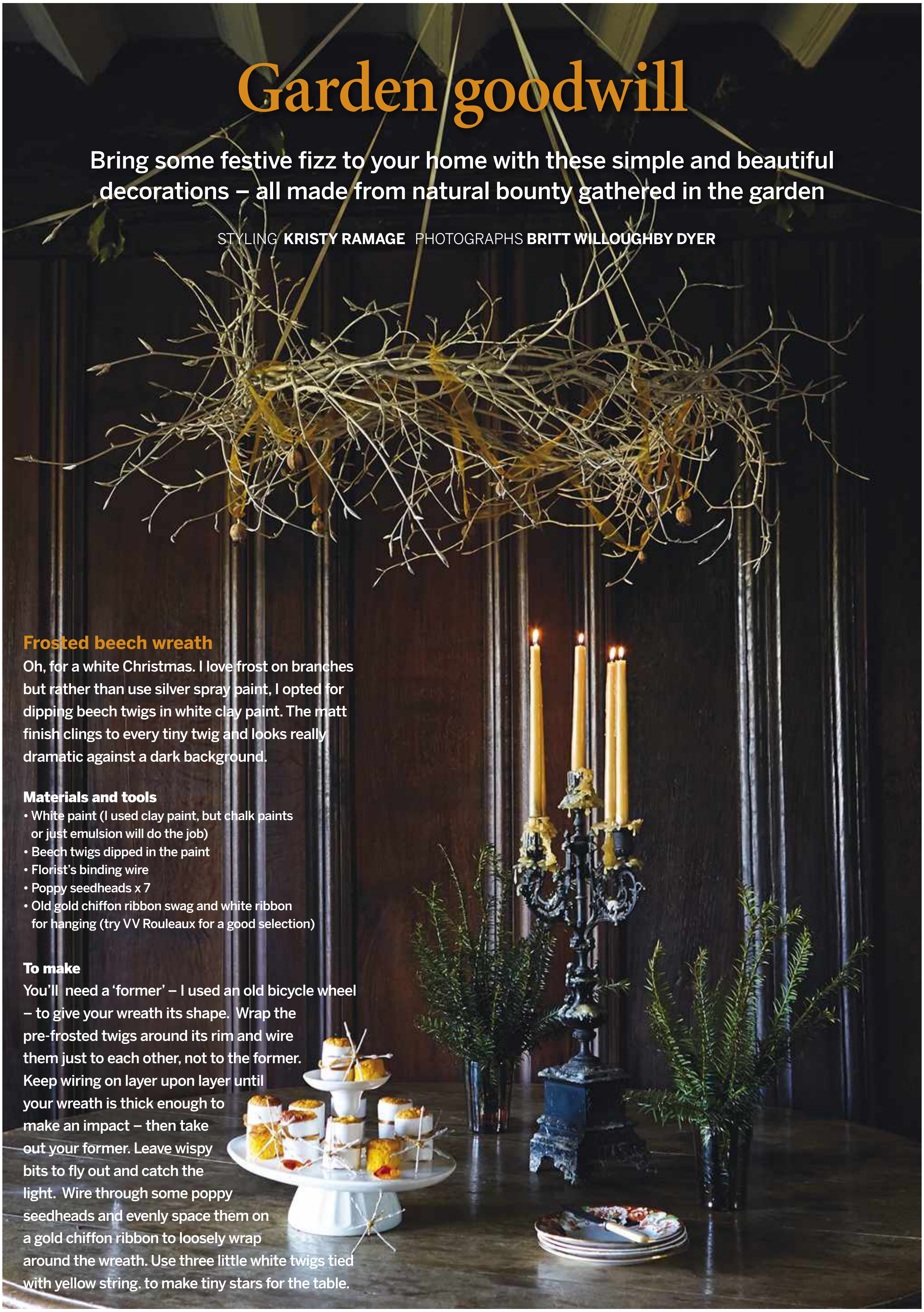
Materials and tools

- Twigs x 5 – straight lengths 34cm long of pencil thickness, shiny dark *Prunus* is striking
- Florist's binding wire, hot glue gun (available at craft shops or try Fred Aldous)
- Nigella seedheads x 35 – leave about 1cm of stalk
- Dried clementine peel x 6 – roughly torn pieces about the size of a 50p coin

To make

Join the ends of the twigs to form a five-point star using hot glue. Bind all junctions with wire. With hot glue, stick the nigella heads at roughly even spacing along the outer points, adding a little clementine piece under the seedhead at each tip. You can use the offcuts to make a little twig star like the one on the frame, which is made from three 10cm-long twigs, simply bound in the middle. Draped over the frame there is a garland of more seedheads threaded on to a ribbon.





Garden goodwill

Bring some festive fizz to your home with these simple and beautiful decorations – all made from natural bounty gathered in the garden

STYLING **KRISTY RAMAGE** PHOTOGRAPHS **BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER**

Frosted beech wreath

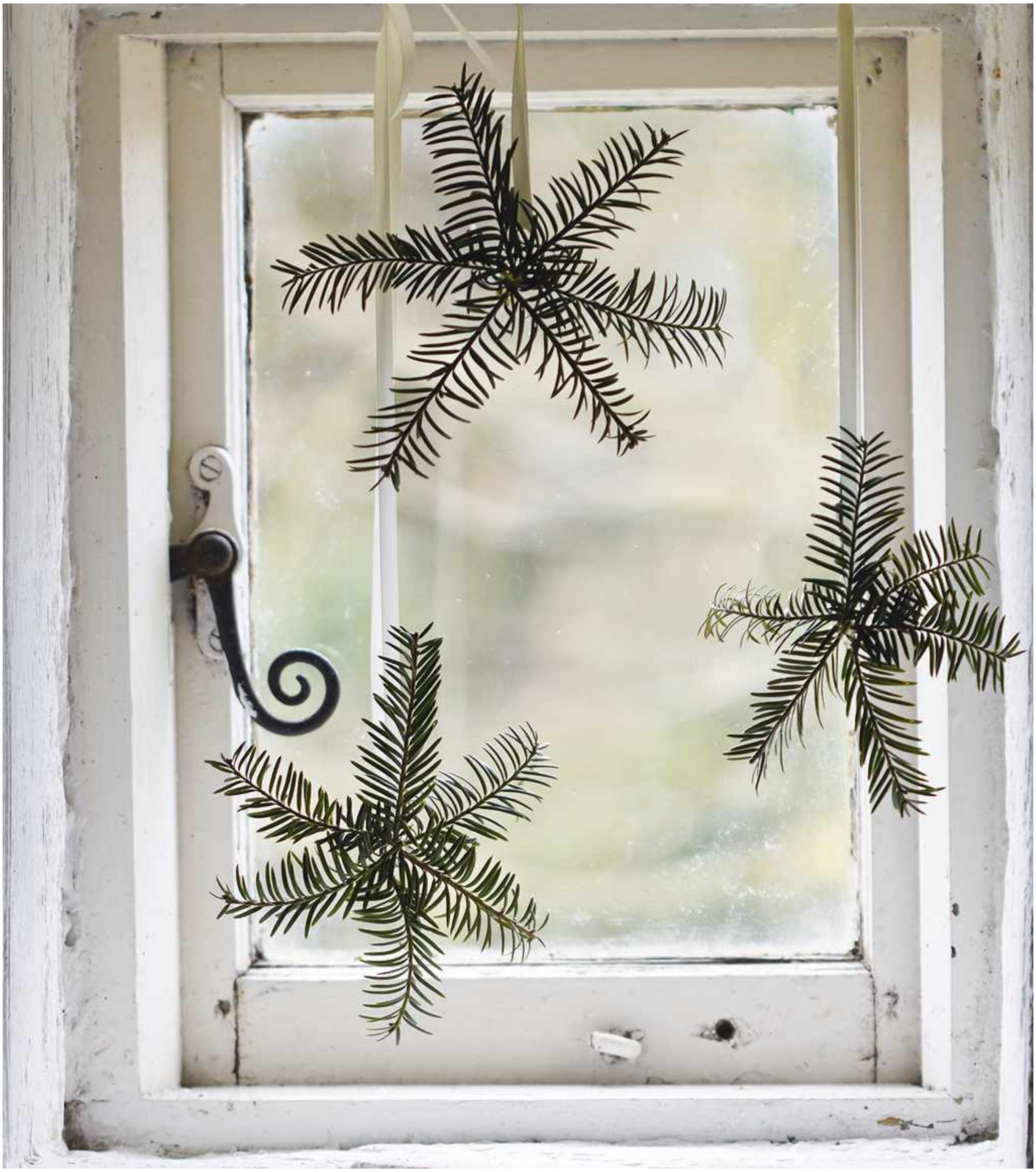
Oh, for a white Christmas. I love frost on branches but rather than use silver spray paint, I opted for dipping beech twigs in white clay paint. The matt finish clings to every tiny twig and looks really dramatic against a dark background.

Materials and tools

- White paint (I used clay paint, but chalk paints or just emulsion will do the job)
- Beech twigs dipped in the paint
- Florist's binding wire
- Poppy seedheads x 7
- Old gold chiffon ribbon swag and white ribbon for hanging (try VV Rouleaux for a good selection)

To make

You'll need a 'former' – I used an old bicycle wheel – to give your wreath its shape. Wrap the pre-frosted twigs around its rim and wire them just to each other, not to the former. Keep wiring on layer upon layer until your wreath is thick enough to make an impact – then take out your former. Leave wispy bits to fly out and catch the light. Wire through some poppy seedheads and evenly space them on a gold chiffon ribbon to loosely wrap around the wreath. Use three little white twigs tied with yellow string. to make tiny stars for the table.



Yew snowflakes

The needles on the tips of yew branches are so pleasing in silhouette, they look as though they are drawn on to the stem. These yew 'snowflakes', hung in the window, are quick and effective to make.

Materials and tools

- **Florist's binding wire (straight)**
- **White 6mm ribbon – roughly 30cm per snowflake**
- **Yew branch tips x 6 per snowflake approx 8cm long**
- **Hot glue gun, snipe-nosed pliers (from Fred Aldous)**

To make

Form a 2cm figure-of-eight (two loops) with the florist's wire by wrapping it around the end of the pliers. Tie the ribbon through one of the loops. Put a dab of hot glue on the other wire loop and lay the end of six pieces of yew in a snowflake formation on top of the glue. The glue sets quickly holding all the yew pieces in place. If you need to press them into the glue do it with the rim of a bottle, it presses down in a ring around the glue rather than sticking to it.

Sprout garland and tiny box wreaths

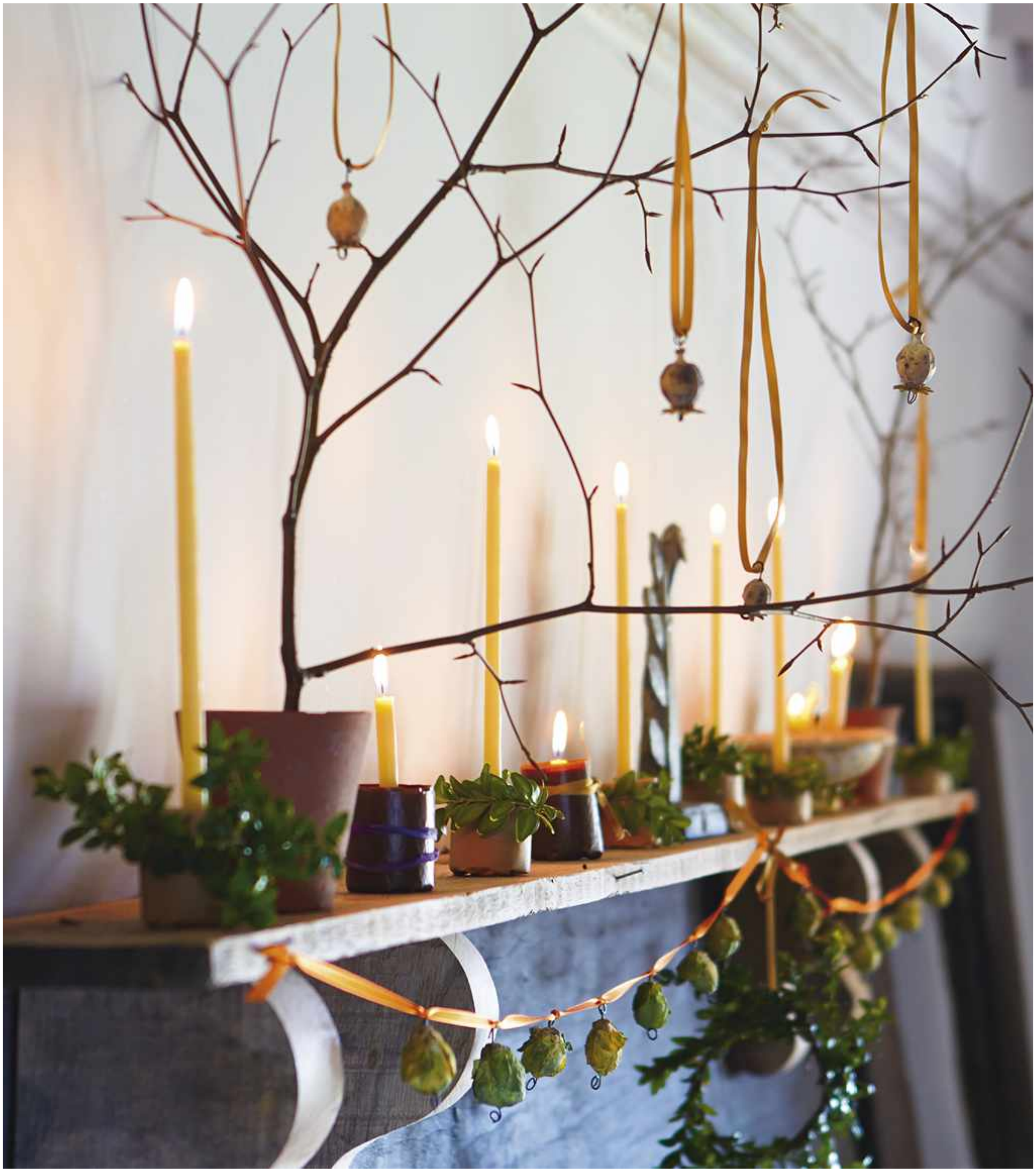
You can use all sorts of fruit and vegetables as well as the more traditional evergreens to make decorations.

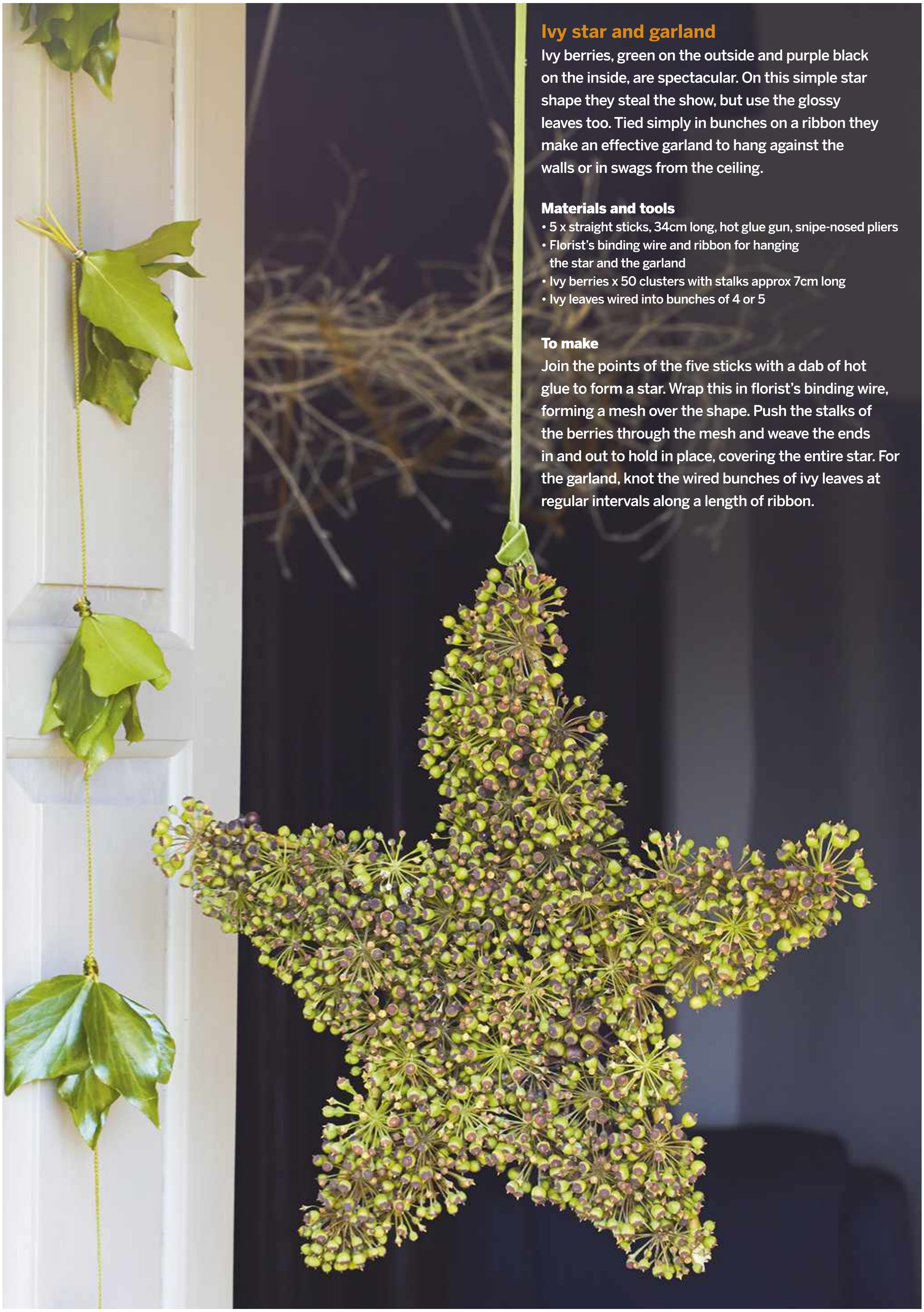
Materials and tools

- **Garland: Brussels sprouts, florist's binding wire (straight) in 8cm lengths, 7mm ribbon, snipe-nosed pliers**
- **Tiny wreaths: Box (*Buxus sempervirens*) clippings approx 12cm long, flexible twigs, ribbon for hanging, hot glue gun**
- **Candle pots: waxed tissue or baking parchment, paper plant pot maker, sand, hand-dipped taper candles (good-quality candles available from Saint Edward Brotherhood)**

To make

For the **garland**, form a 5mm wire loop around the pliers. Push the remaining end of wire through each sprout, making an end loop to hold it. Knot the 'baubles' on to the ribbon at regular intervals. For the **tiny box wreath** weave a small circle of the flexible twigs and push the box clippings into it. A dab of hot glue will hold them in place. For the **candle pots** fill seedling pots with sand and put the candle in. Wet the sand and press down firmly. Secure box clippings to pot with glue.





Ivy star and garland

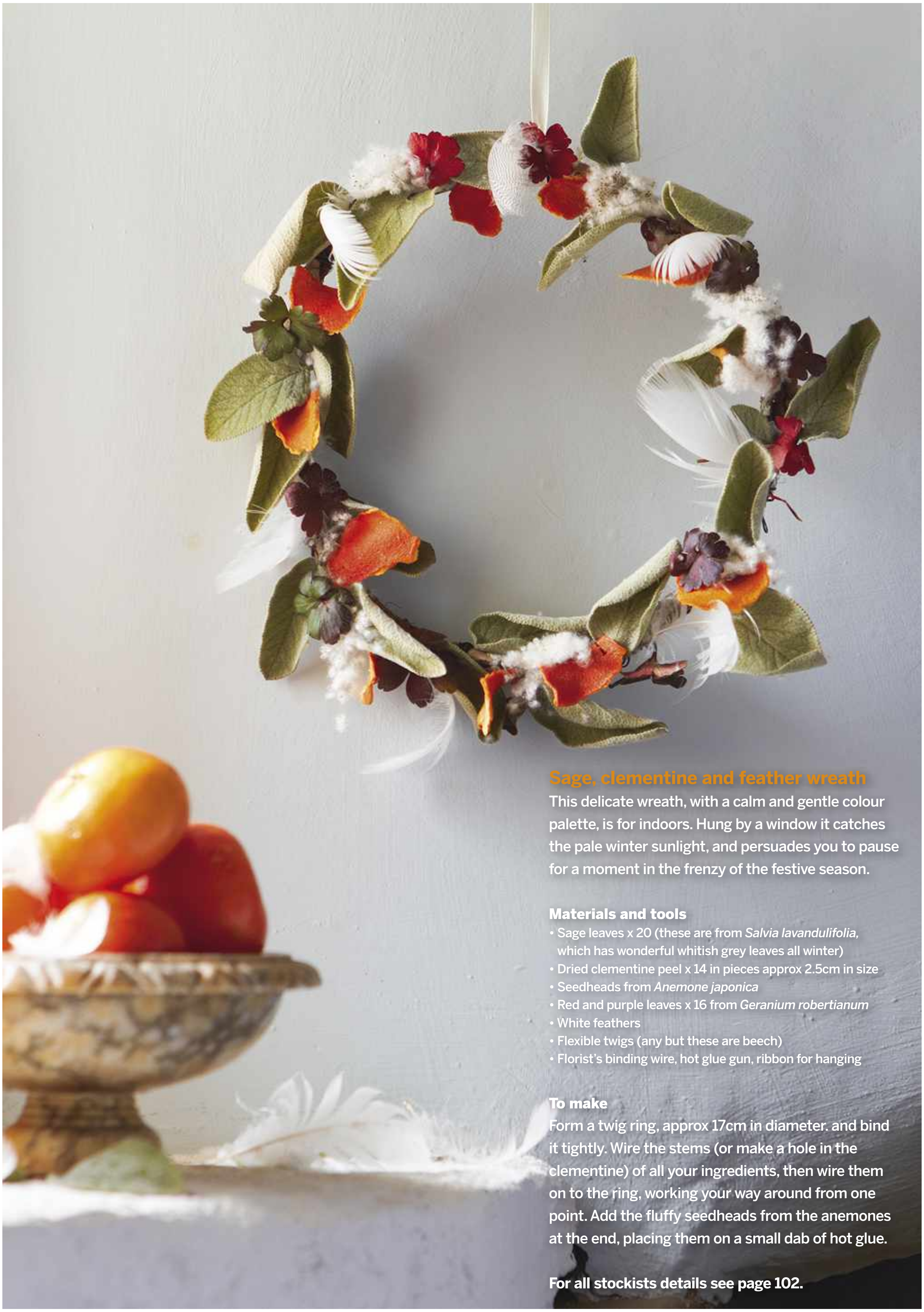
Ivy berries, green on the outside and purple black on the inside, are spectacular. On this simple star shape they steal the show, but use the glossy leaves too. Tied simply in bunches on a ribbon they make an effective garland to hang against the walls or in swags from the ceiling.

Materials and tools

- 5 x straight sticks, 34cm long, hot glue gun, snipe-nosed pliers
- Florist's binding wire and ribbon for hanging the star and the garland
- Ivy berries x 50 clusters with stalks approx 7cm long
- Ivy leaves wired into bunches of 4 or 5

To make

Join the points of the five sticks with a dab of hot glue to form a star. Wrap this in florist's binding wire, forming a mesh over the shape. Push the stalks of the berries through the mesh and weave the ends in and out to hold in place, covering the entire star. For the garland, knot the wired bunches of ivy leaves at regular intervals along a length of ribbon.



Sage, clementine and feather wreath

This delicate wreath, with a calm and gentle colour palette, is for indoors. Hung by a window it catches the pale winter sunlight, and persuades you to pause for a moment in the frenzy of the festive season.

Materials and tools

- Sage leaves x 20 (these are from *Salvia lavandulifolia,* which has wonderful whitish grey leaves all winter)
- Dried clementine peel x 14 in pieces approx 2.5cm in size
- Seedheads from *Anemone japonica*
- Red and purple leaves x 16 from *Geranium robertianum*
- White feathers
- Flexible twigs (any but these are beech)
- Florist's binding wire, hot glue gun, ribbon for hanging

To make

Form a twig ring, approx 17cm in diameter. and bind it tightly. Wire the stems (or make a hole in the clementine) of all your ingredients, then wire them on to the ring, working your way around from one point. Add the fluffy seedheads from the anemones at the end, placing them on a small dab of hot glue.

For all stockists details see page 102.

Andrea Cochran

The San Francisco-based designer who combines minimalism with lush planting in her architectural landscapes – and is as stylish as the gardens she creates

WORDS PAULA DEITZ PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

A New Yorker by birth but raised in semi-rural New Jersey, landscape architect Andrea Cochran now thrives in northern California, where she discovered "a cultural atmosphere that challenges convention and fosters a new way of looking at the world". Her sumptuous, stunningly barren landscapes with gnarled trees, flat planes and long grasses prove her understanding of California's rich agrarian tradition – vineyards and orchards planted in regimented rows reflected in her own designs. Her warehouse office on San Francisco's waterfront houses a staff of 14 and myriad samples of such contemporary materials as acrylic, Corten steel and aluminium, along with every variety of stone. Statuesque with a shock of white hair and dressed in 'architecture black', at age 59 she cuts the figure of a model though with professional aplomb.

In her young heart she was an artist, but parental guidance suggested something more practical to make a living, and so she entered Rutgers University in New Jersey to study veterinary medicine as a way of expressing her other interest in the natural sciences. She quickly found her true calling during a first-year, survey-course lecture by Roy DeBoer, then chairman of the Department of Landscape Architecture. She had not known the discipline existed but quickly understood from his talk that it combined both art and science. She switched her major.

Later, when she studied for her master's degree at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design, the faculty included, most auspiciously, the renowned landscape architect Peter Walker and the Catalan architect and city planner Josep Lluís Sert. Walker's influence is evident in Andrea's modernist bent for spatial overlay and geometric principles, which had been established, she acknowledges, as early as in the designs of the 17th-century landscape architect André Le Nôtre.

After graduation, she went to work for Sert in his Cambridge, Massachusetts, office before, through another Harvard connection, she was drafted to work for a firm in Athens. There she learned to love the dry, grey-green landscapes of the Mediterranean, filled with olive groves. She recognised a similar climate and terrain when she moved to California and found a sensibility she liked: "Californians understood about landscape architecture – no one asked me about spots on plants – and they live out of doors as much as in."

California landscape modernists, such as Thomas D Church and Garrett Eckbo, had already pioneered in the field. She stayed, and above all, her designs promote the permeability of the house by the garden in what she calls "a choreography of space" to create an experience by invisibly directing people.

Based as much on feeling and narrative as pure logic, Andrea's landscapes demonstrate a restraint that nevertheless exudes luxury in the richness of materials and in the range of textures and colours that enhance the seasonal progressions. Like contemporary minimalist sculptors, she has embraced the earthy, weathered qualities of Corten steel for paving, balustrades or reveals around planting beds in contrast to rugged stone walls and flat planes of gravel or grass. On one property, she complemented the borrowed landscape of a vineyard by planting a grid of pear trees that provide spring blossoms and brilliant autumnal colour.

Like such modernist heroes as Mexican architect Luis Barragán and Brazilian landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx, her architectural elements are sharp and planar, and her plantings tend to panels of a single variety, almost like crops. Believing that landscapes engage all the senses, she is also mindful of the fresh fragrance of cut grass and the crunch of gravel underfoot at an entrance. For lighting, she is concerned not only for illumination after dark, but for artful luminescence, to wash an acrylic wall or define slits between paving stones.

Within these seductive and stark landscapes, the most pivotal element remains the tree, usually the olive, the California bay tree or the live oak, with either thick, gnarled, or twisted trunks that reek of antiquity. Seen mostly solitary with perfectly pruned branches and bushed-out leaves, even when placed in rows, each retains its individuality. In creating landscapes to celebrate nature in a quiet way, Andrea – like the artist Robert Irwin, whom she admires – alters the perception of space, and yet, even in her minimalist approach with industrial materials, she seeks to recreate "the humble farm over and over again". □

USEFUL INFORMATION

acochran.com

Discover more about Andrea's contemporary design ideas when we visit one of her Californian gardens in the January issue.

NEXT MONTH

Plant hunter and nurseryman, Michael Wickenden

Her landscapes demonstrate a restraint that nevertheless exudes luxury

Late-flowering roses

For many, roses are the epitome of summer but most continue to bloom long after summer's lease has expired and winter frosts have begun to bite

WORDS **CHARLES QUEST-RITSON**

In brief

What Late-flowering roses that carry the season of colour right through to the first frosts.
Origins Roses have been intensively developed as garden plants for more than 200 years.
Season Most roses flower more than once. All of those that flower late, flower first in early summer. In warm climates, some flower perpetually.
Size Everything from miniatures to tall climbers; most useful are the bush roses.
Conditions Very easy in almost every position, but roses give best results if well fed.

GAP PHOTOS/FRIEDRICH STRAUSS

Charles Quest-Ritson is editor of the *RHS Encyclopedia of Roses*, published by Dorling Kindersley

Roses are one of the few shrubs that flower continuously. Think about it – we do not expect our forsythias or ceanothus to flower for months on end, but most modern roses in Britain will oblige by producing their flowers from early summer right through to the first frosts.

In warmer climates they flower continuously, and people who live in London will tell you that their microclimate produces roses even in deep winter. Nineteenth-century roses, such as Gallicas and Centifolias, flower only once (alas – but how beautiful they are!), but for at least the past 100 years we've come to expect our roses to be as sumptuous at this time of the year as they were in May and June. In fact, we take it for granted.

The genes for repeat-flowering arrived about 200 years ago with a small number of garden roses from China, which took their English names from the original introducers; Hume's blush and Slater's crimson bear the names of merchants of the East India Company. Such roses had been developed and cultivated in China for more than 1,000 years, and so it is to many generations of forgotten Chinese gardeners that we owe the expectation that roses will flower and flower again.

Crosses with European and Asian roses, especially with Gallicas and Damasks, brought us the strongly growing, sweet-scented Hybrid Teas and, later, the Floribundas that give so much colour to our gardens throughout the best months for gardening.

In one sense, there are no autumn-flowering roses, because they all flower in summer and, for some of the older cultivars, that is their only flowering.

Some do flower later than others – the 'Dorothy Perkins' tribe of ramblers that includes 'Excelsa' and 'Turner's Crimson Rambler' do not really get under way until early August – but no roses begin

▷

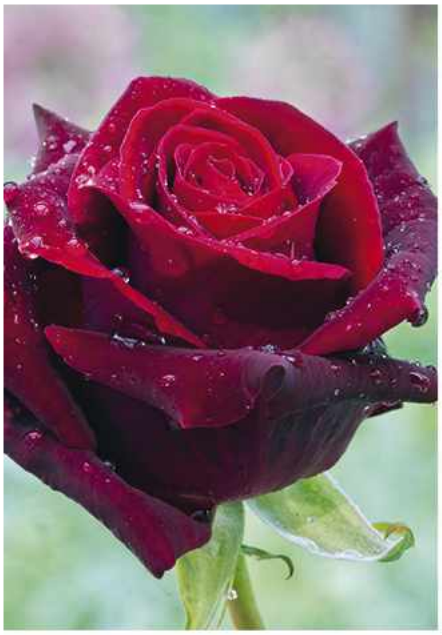
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

▷ to flower as late as even the middle of August. There is a very special quality that roses enjoy when they flower in autumn. October's blooms have a lushness unknown in summer. Some people say that disease among roses is more of a problem in autumn, but the significance of black spot and mildew has been grossly exaggerated: ignore the signs of disease (the plant will survive) and just enjoy the flowers.

Here in Britain, the special opulence of roses in autumn may be underlined by a sense of impending doom – everything could end as soon as the first frosts bite. That does not apply in warmer climates. Most roses flower all through the year in tropical countries, even to the extent that they have to be pruned when still in flower. Try potting up some of your roses to grow indoors and flower in winter – the best time to do this is in late autumn – but just bringing the pots into a cold greenhouse or conservatory will give you roses six weeks earlier than usual next spring.

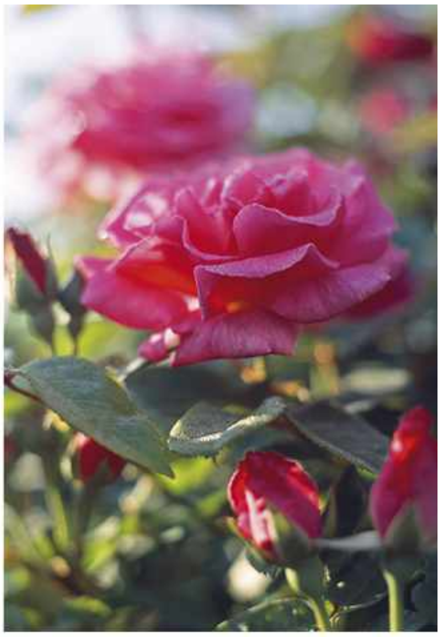
Roses in autumn tend to be darker in colour – the pale pinks of summer become dark pinks, yellow roses may be more orange or buff in colour, and white roses like Iceberg often have a touch of pink that is missing when they first bloom. There are more flowers in autumn, too: some of the Hybrid Musks, so striking at this time of the year, will carry as many as 80 flowers in a cluster, whereas in summer they had barely 20. Indeed there are bedding roses that start as Hybrid Teas in summer but perform more like Floribundas in autumn. That said, not all cultivars flower so profusely in autumn as they do in summer – some are repeat-flowering, others continuous-flowering. Some of the old Hybrid Perpetuals are far from perpetual-flowering. It's hard to know which are the best re-flowering ones and this is something that is difficult to discover from books. Deadheading after they flower in summer will speed up their re-growth and encourage more flowers – as will feeding them and, in dry weather, extra watering. All those listed in this article flower either continuously or repeatedly and profusely.

• Charles's recommendations for late-flowering roses continues over the next six pages.



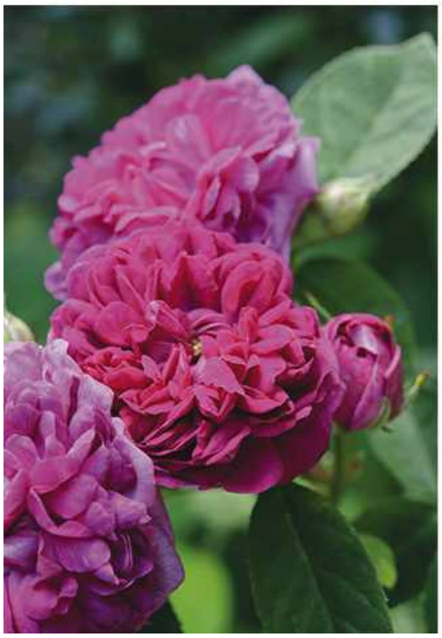
GAP PHOTOS/RON EVANS

ROSA 'DEEP SECRET'
Also known as 'Mildred Scheel', its flowers have classic Hybrid Tea elegance in bud but are charmingly muddled when they open out. Deep crimson flowers. Very strongly scented. Hybrid Tea. 60-90cm. USDA 6b-10b†.



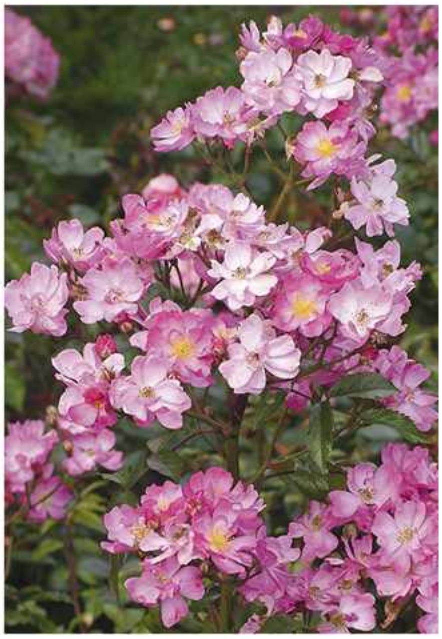
THE NATIONAL TRUST PHOTOLIBRARY / ALAMY

***R.* 'ZÉPHIRINE DROUHIN'**
Widely known as 'the thornless rose'. Flowers are bright, cherry pink; scent is sweet, rich and delicious. One of the first and last roses to bloom, and then continuously in flower. Bourbon. 3m. USDA 5a-10b.



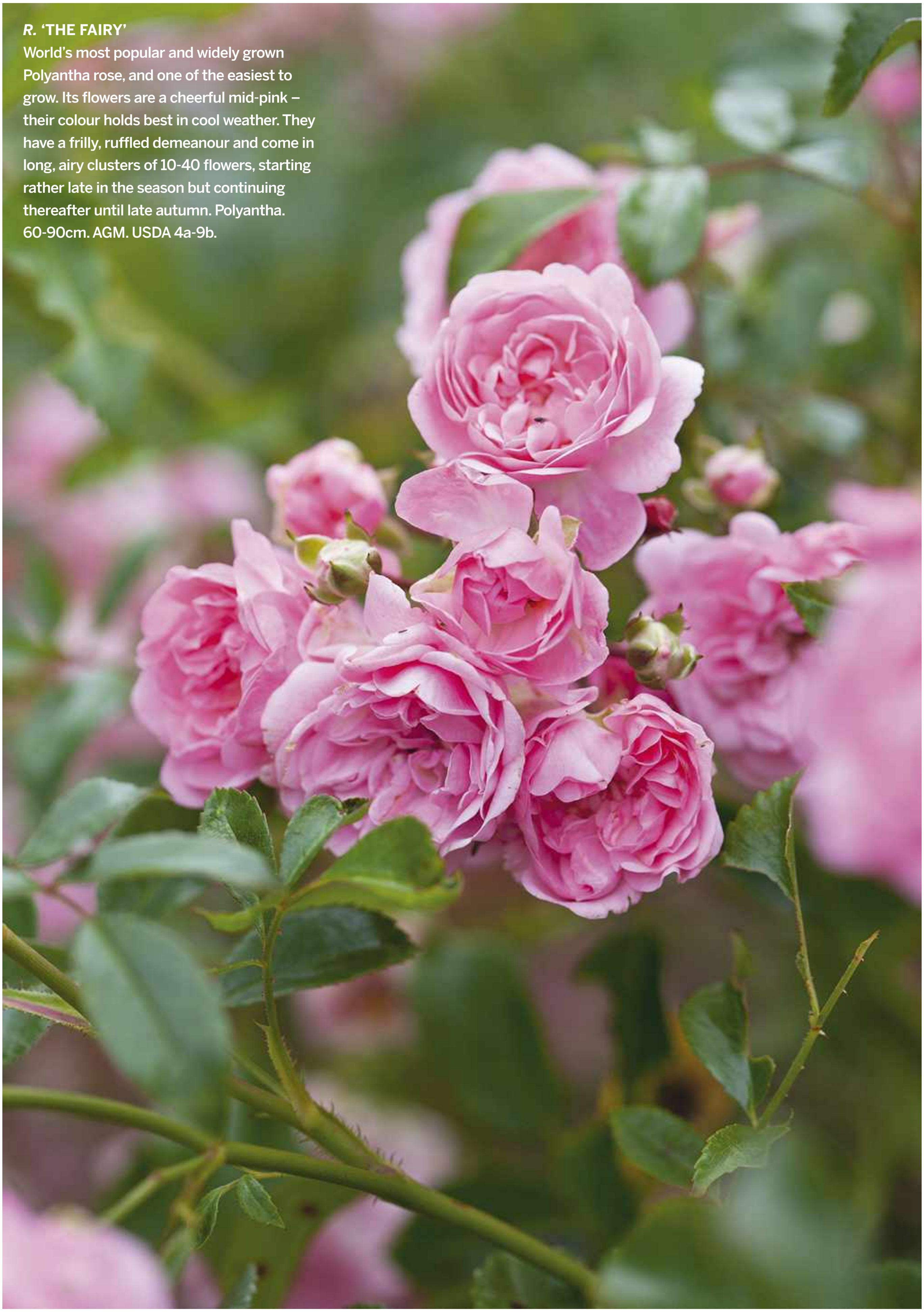
JASON INGRAM

***R.* 'DE RESHT'**
Flowers come in tight, small clusters on short stems, surrounded by a ruff of leaves. Repeats at approximately six-week intervals, provided it is dead-headed after each flush. Damask Portland. 90cm-1.2m. AGM*. USDA 4a-9b.



CHARLES QUEST-RITSON

***R.* 'YESTERDAY'**
Shrubby, with pale, purple-crimson petals, a white centre and a neat tuft of golden stamens. Almost continually in flower until late autumn. Works well in a mixed border. Polyantha. 90cm-1.2m. AGM. USDA 4a-10b.

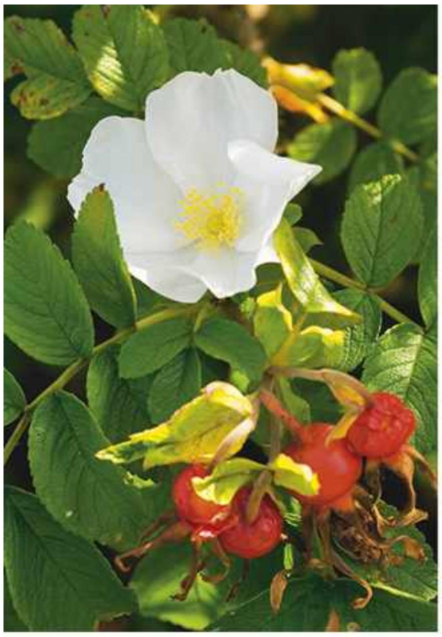


***R.* 'THE FAIRY'**
World's most popular and widely grown Polyantha rose, and one of the easiest to grow. Its flowers are a cheerful mid-pink – their colour holds best in cool weather. They have a frilly, ruffled demeanour and come in long, airy clusters of 10-40 flowers, starting rather late in the season but continuing thereafter until late autumn. Polyantha. 60-90cm. AGM. USDA 4a-9b.

GAP PHOTOS/TOMMY TONSBERG

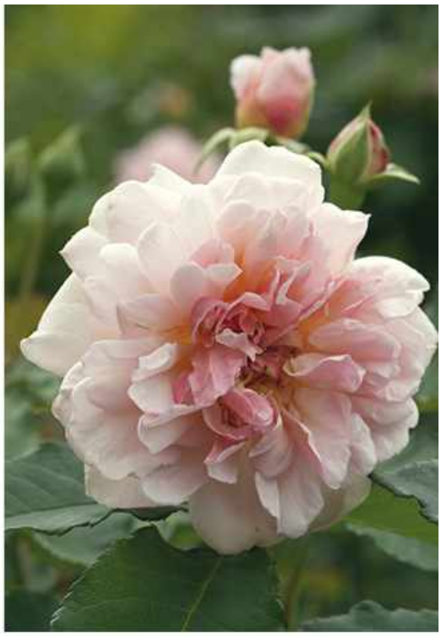
_R._ ICEBERG (=‘KORBIN’)
Originally ‘Schneewittchen’ this popular and widely grown Floribunda is exceptionally hardy – flowering for 12 months of the year in hot climates. The lightly double, pure-white flowers have just a hint of pink in cool weather. Flowers are very long-lasting, both in the garden and when cut. They are most prolifically borne, and drop their petals cleanly when spent. Floribunda. 60-90cm. AGM. USDA 4a-9a.

CLAIRE TAKACS



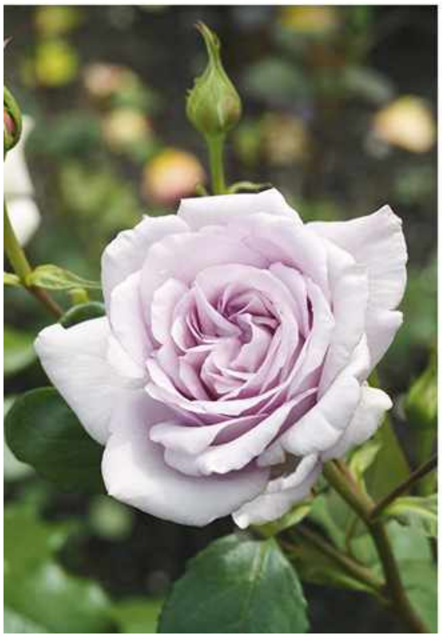
MBP-PLANTS / ALAMY

R. *RUGOSA* 'ALBA'
Flowers right through until autumn, when the first flush of hips are already ripe and leaves a deep, golden yellow. Crinkly petalled flowers with a large circle of pale yellow stamens at centre. Rugosa. 1.2-1.8m. USDA 2a-9b.



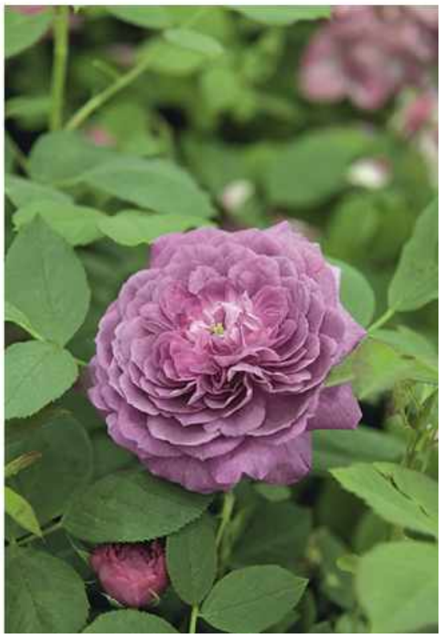
NICHOLAS APPLEBY / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES

***R.* 'FELICIA'**
Sweet-scented flowers, with long, pale, salmon-pink petals in autumn. Combine wonderfully with Michaelmas daisies and purple aconites in the autumn border. Hybrid Musk. 1.2-1.8m. AGM. USDA 6a-10b.



GAP PHOTOS/PAUL DEBOIS

***R.* TWICE IN A BLUE MOON (= 'TAN96138')**
Long-lasting autumn flowers have a luminous quality found in no other rose of its colour. It has an almost ghostly grey sheen, but with dark crimson shadows at base of petals and a stupendous sweet scent. Hybrid Tea. 90cm.



MARTIN HUGHES-JONES/THE GARDEN COLLECTION

***R.* 'REINE DES VIOLETTES'**
Its popularity amounts almost to a cult. Rich purple flowers, fading to lilac-mauve, with pale silvery pink undersides. Its scent is rich and delicious. Hybrid Perpetual. 1.2-1.8m. AGM. USDA 4a-9b.

Cultivation

The traditional wisdom is that you should spray your roses regularly with fungicides – and feed them and prune them and make as much work for yourself as possible. In fact roses are extremely easy to grow and thrive upon neglect. Tests carried out some years ago by the Royal National Rose Society showed that, if you wish to grow perfect roses, with never the slightest blemish on their leaves, you should spray them with a systemic fungicide very early in the season, when the new shoots are only a few centimetres long – say, in mid-March. Then, if you spray them again four weeks later, the bushes will stay free of black spot and mildew right through to autumn.

That's the theory, but of course the reality is different. Fungal diseases are a problem only in cool, damp climates like Britain's. If you garden in California's Central Valley or South Australia's Riverina, you may wonder what black spot looks like. It is also true that some cultivars are more susceptible than others, but fungal organisms are forever mutating and producing new strains: the rose that is introduced today as 100 per cent-resistant to infection may some years later be susceptible to black spot or mildew. Does it matter? Not at all. Roses have a way of throwing off these diseases so that, by the time they flower again next year, the leaves will be as glossy and green as ever. Lazy gardeners like me do not bother to spray their roses, and I can safely say that I have never lost a single plant to mildew or black spot. The important thing is to enjoy them.

A rose-tinted world

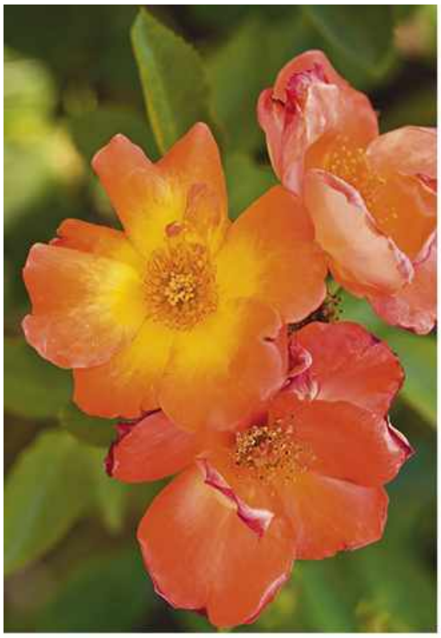
British gardeners think they have the best rose gardens in the world. The truth is that there are more impressive and historical gardens in almost every other corner of the world. No British garden has more than 2,000 cultivars for visitors to admire. Paris has two exquisitely elegant rose-gardens – each over 100 years old – at the Parc de Bagatelle in the Bois de Boulogne ▷

▷ (equipement.paris.fr/parc-de-bagatelle-1808) and la Roseraie du Val de Marne at L'Haÿ-les-Roses (www.roseraieduvaldemarne.fr). Each has 3,000-4,000 different roses. In the Heritage Rose garden at San Jose, California (heritageroses.us), are more than 3,000 'found' roses, rustled from old homesteads, propagated, grown on and identified, if possible, by experts in the history of roses. Europa-Rosarium at Sangerhausen in Germany (europa-rosarium.de) has the largest collection of roses in the world – 8,300 species and cultivars.

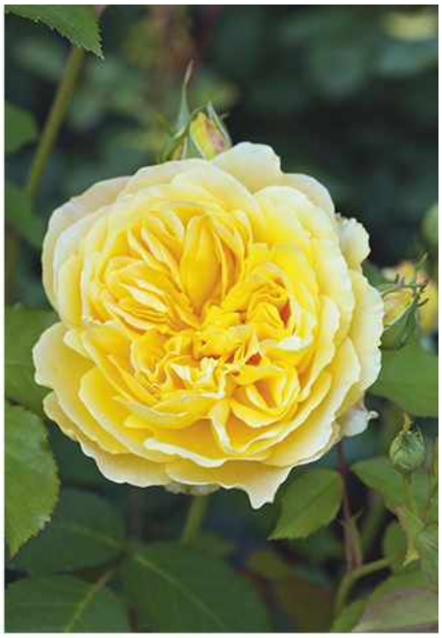
Where British gardens really score is in the way we use roses as elements of design in mixed plantings. It is a tradition described and worked on by Gertrude Jekyll and, years later, by Graham Stuart Thomas. His masterpiece is the walled garden at Mottisfont Abbey in Hampshire – (nationaltrust.org.uk/mottisfont). Here are billowing forms of old roses of every sort, wonderfully set off by colour associations: yellow roses are absorbed by blue flowers and grey leaves; blues and reds and crimsons are bound together by excluding the colour yellow; upright shapes combine with the lax shrubbiness of roses; dark colours contrast with white and yellow foxgloves. It is a garden where every colour and every tone comes together like an orchestra to create the perfect symphony of beauty.

Where to see and buy

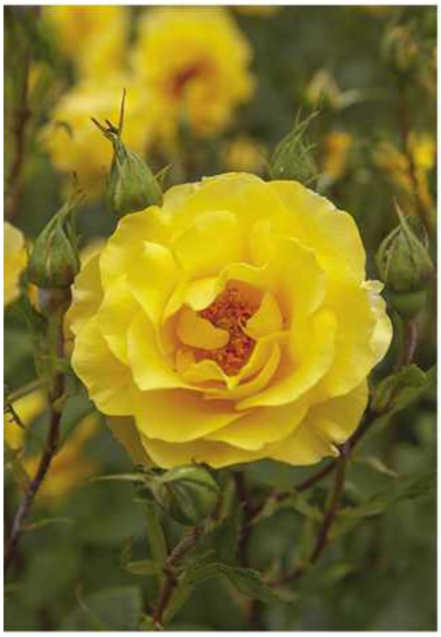
- **David Austin Roses**
  Bowling Green Lane, Albrighton,
  Wolverhampton WV7 3HB.
  Tel 01902 376334,
  davidaustinroses.com
- **The Regent's Park, London**
  royalparks.org.uk/parks/
  the-regents-park/flora-and-fauna
- **Royal National Rose Society Garden**
  Chiswell Green Lane, St Albans,
  Hertfordshire AL2 3NR.
  Tel 01727 850461, rnrs.org.uk


ANDREA JONES IMAGES / ALAMY

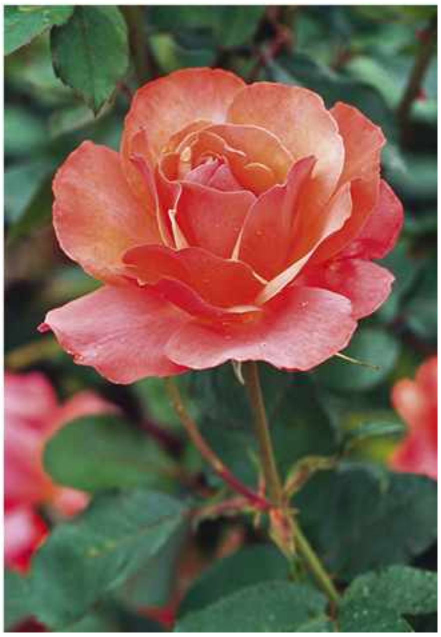
***R.* 'PLAYBOY'**
Guaranteed to brighten up any garden. Golden-yellow flowers with dark-orange edging and handsome, golden stamens. Lightly double, with wavy edges to the petals. Floribunda. 90cm-1.2m. USDA 5b-9b.


GAP PHOTOS/ROB WHITWORTH

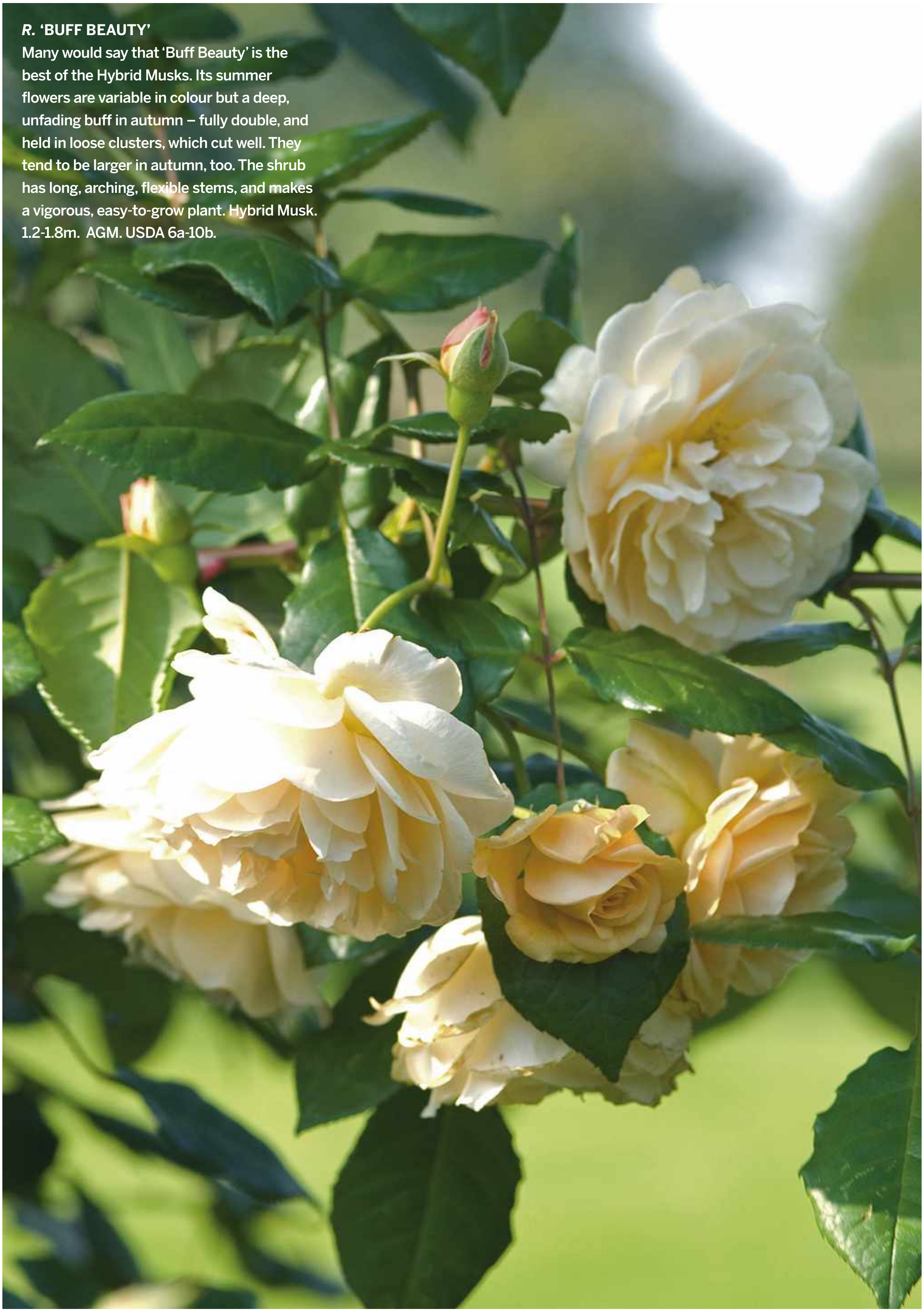
***R.* MOLINEUX (= 'AUSMOL')**
Most free-flowering of David Austin's richly yellow roses. Strong-scented with lots of petals. Fades to lemon, with creamy edges. Bush is never without one or two flowers. Shrub. 90cm-1.2m. AGM. USDA 5b-10b.


GAP PHOTOS/MATT ANKER

***R.* PRINCESS ALICE (= 'HARTANNA')**
Vigorous and prolific. Large clusters of golden-yellow flowers that hold colour and last well when cut. Often in flower when there is little else to admire in the rose garden. Floribunda. 90cm-1.2m. USDA 4a-9b.


DAVE ZUBRASKI / ALAMY

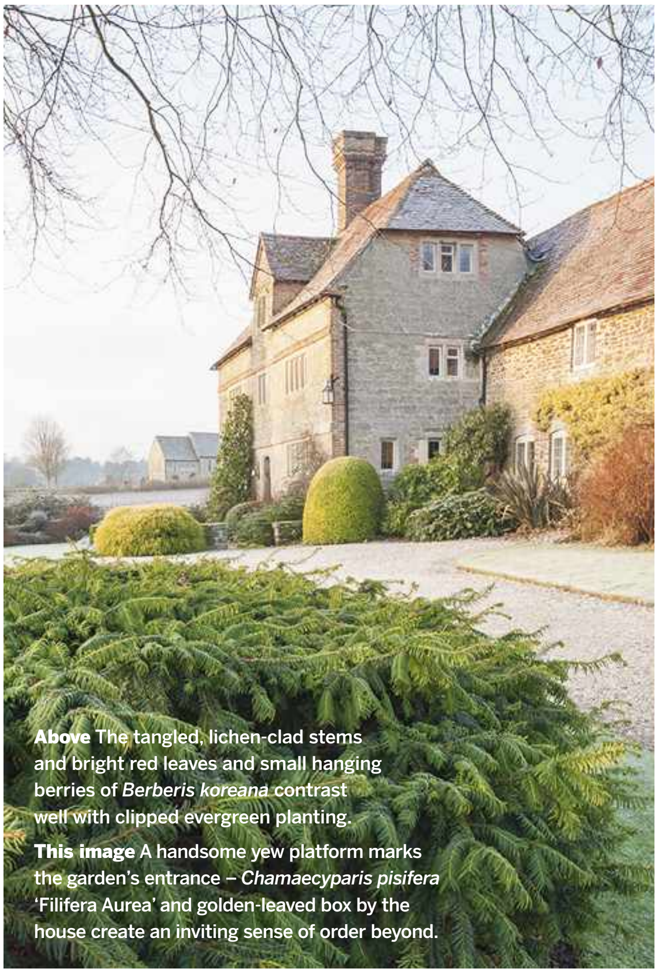
***ROSA* TINTINARA (= 'DICUPTIGHT')**
Brilliant scarlet flowers when they first open seem all the hotter for the yellow tints at the base of the petals. A bush of large, glowing flowers in its full glory is simply glorious. Hybrid Tea. 90cm-1.2m. AGM.



R. 'BUFF BEAUTY'

Many would say that 'Buff Beauty' is the best of the Hybrid Musks. Its summer flowers are variable in colour but a deep, unfading buff in autumn – fully double, and held in loose clusters, which cut well. They tend to be larger in autumn, too. The shrub has long, arching, flexible stems, and makes a vigorous, easy-to-grow plant. Hybrid Musk. 1.2-1.8m. AGM. USDA 6a-10b.

GAP PHOTOS/ZARA NAPIER



Above The tangled, lichen-clad stems and bright red leaves and small hanging berries of *Berberis koreana* contrast well with clipped evergreen planting.

This image A handsome yew platform marks the garden's entrance – *Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Filifera Aurea' and golden-leaved box by the house create an inviting sense of order beyond.

On frosty mornings the strong structure of Coates Manor's garden is revealed to full effect.

Structurally proud

What started life as an ordinary family garden has been transformed into a masterclass of classic structural planting

WORDS **NON MORRIS** PHOTOGRAPHS **CAROLE DRAKE**

In brief

Name Coates Manor.
What Elegant garden around small Elizabethan manor house.
Where Near Pulborough, Sussex.
Size One acre.
Soil Sand on gravel.
Climate Tends to be dry, windy in parts.
Points of interest Excellent structural planting, sheltered walled garden, framed views to the countryside beyond.

"I never dreamed anyone would be interested in the garden, it's just me"

There has been an enchanting garden at the beautiful Elizabethan Coates Manor for more than 50 years. Mrs Thorp, a tiny, elegant figure in a honey-coloured fur jacket and fingerless gloves is adamant that this exquisite and perfectly composed space is an ordinary "family garden… I never dreamed anyone would be interested in it, it's just me."

The Thorps arrived in 1960. The house was 'gaunt and unloved' and the garden waist-high with grass. During the first year Mrs Thorp "studied the garden from every aspect" working out how the sun "affected the different corners". As she renovated the interior, she thought about the garden. "Every room has at least two windows. I just worked it out looking through the windows."

An experienced flower arranger, she decided that 'interesting foliage' would be the key to her planting. She admired the garden writer, Michael Haworth-Booth who recommended using trees and shrubs that ▷

Main picture Clipped box, *Magnolia grandiflora*, *Chaenomeles* x *superba* 'Knap Hill Scarlet' and *Hypericum* add interest around the front door.

Top right *Viburnum rhytidophyllum* grows by the front gate, while a soft red brick path leads to the perfectly judged planting near the house.

Middle right *Drimys lanceolata*, the Australian pepper, is a frost-hardy shrub for a sheltered spot with wonderful burgundy stems.

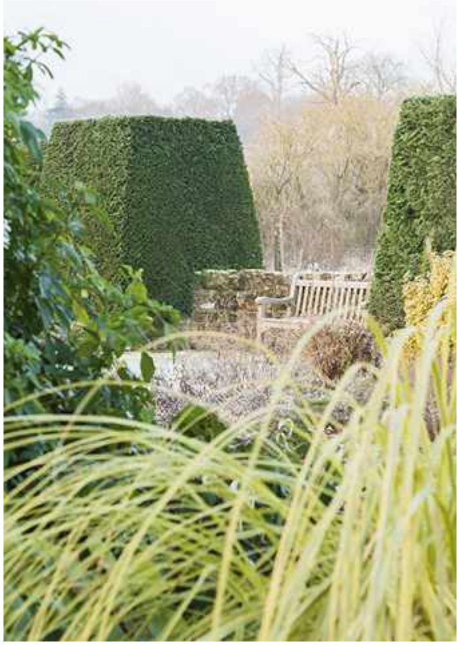
Bottom right A bench by the summer house is the ideal spot from which to admire the garden. The table is made from a recently felled apple tree.

Everything is perfectly judged from the foliage to the way Cotoneaster horizontalis *forms a neat bower above a bench*

▷ offered good foliage, berries and autumn colour as well as spring blossom. Soon she was supplying London florist Pulbrook & Gould with weekly deliveries of foliage – "long branches of privet, golden privet – pretty much anything except for ferns".

The Thorps' first move was to remove 60cm of brick paving at the front of the house to provide planting space on either side of the front door. They dug a 1.8m-wide border around the boundary for privacy and planted a classic Leyland cypress hedge at the back of the house to provide shelter from the open fields beyond.

The planting against the front of the house is classic and lovely. A pair of fan-trained *Chaenomeles* x *superba* 'Knap Hill Scarlet' offer jewel-like scarlet flowers against the soft stone walls, *Hedera colchica* 'Dentata Variegata' lights up one corner, rounded clumps of both silver and golden *Euonymus* provide bright companions for emerging spring bulbs and a single glossy column *Magnolia grandiflora* is balanced by a well-shaped dome of box. Perfectly judged specimen plants – a pair of squared shaped *Buxus*, a glowing citrus ballgown of *Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Filifera Aurea', a tangled, russet-stemmed, ball of *Berberis* ▷

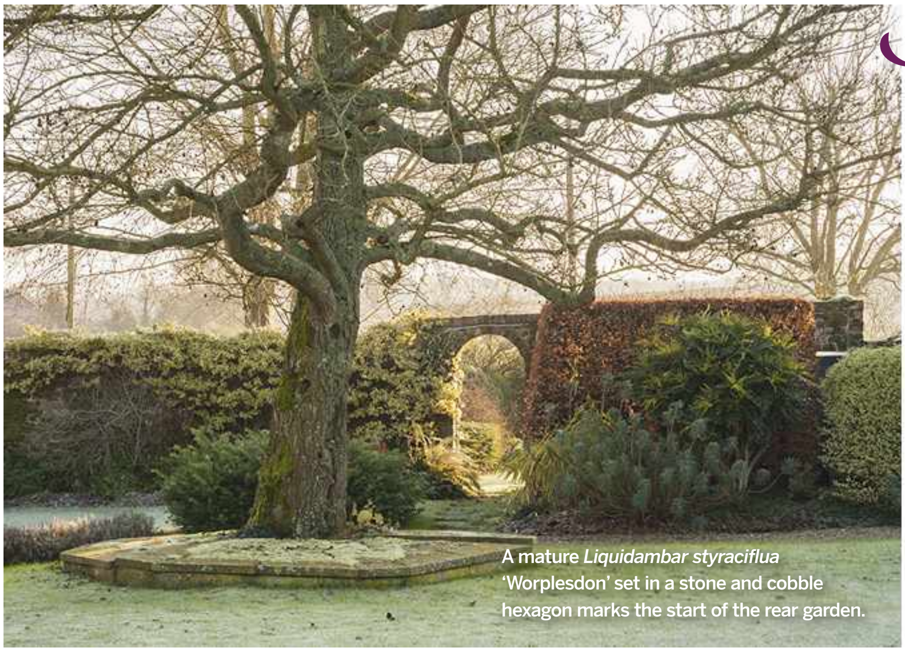


Top left *Garrya elliptica* (top), *Fatsia japonica* and *Mahonia* x *media* 'Charity' work well together in a shady corner at the front of the house.

Middle left A distinctive pair of topiary box shapes provide a focal point in the front garden.

Bottom left The closely clipped cypress hedge boldly frames the view to the fields beyond the rear garden.

Main picture A tight column of golden yew, glowing in the low winter sun, provides a focal point for the softly planted walled garden.



A mature *Liquidambar styraciflua* 'Worplesdon' set in a stone and cobble hexagon marks the start of the rear garden.

Her husband teased her for the 'indecent haste' with which she dug up the family tennis court

▷ *koreana* and a 1.8m domed thimble of golden-leaved box begin to map out the garden beyond.

Dense ribbons of silvery-mauve crocus – not bought, they "just arrived" – form spectacular edging along the moss-softened paths. The front border has evolved over the years. *Viburnum davidii* pruned to a small, plump tree nestling into the vibrant spotted leaves of golden laurel, the handsome downward hanging leaves of *Viburnum rhytidophyllum* with branches of yew jutting out beneath it, the red stems of *Rosa glauca* surrounded by a stand of pale-green-flowered *Helleborus foetidus*. Like the crocus, the hellebore is uninvited but, as Mrs Thorp says "it gives everything a lift". The front gate is marked by a handsome copper beech with a solid, flat-topped skirt of clipped yew at its base. This time the combination was meticulously planned, the yew and the beech "planted at exactly the same time because they fight for space".

Through the brick archway – flanked by immaculately trained ivy – lies the rear garden. Although Mrs Thorp tells fond tales of children playing here, she admits that her husband teased her for the 'indecent haste' with which she dug up the family tennis court the moment her daughter got engaged. A succession of lovely details – a regal *Liquidambar styraciflua* 'Worplesdon' set in a stone and cobble hexagon and a pool of prostrate *Cotoneaster procumbens* 'Queen of Carpets' edged with white *Bergenia*. But the real triumph is the original cypress hedge transformed into a crisply shaped opening on to the view beyond: a huge, spreading oak; pale stubble and clear-blue sky.

Through another arch, a lovely suntrap of a walled garden with a tight column of golden yew glowing at the end of irregular beds overspilling with soft planting. Again everything is perfectly judged: the fascinating foliage of the rock plant, *Genista sagittalis*, the hazy shimmer of *Molinia caerulea* 'Moorflamme' and the way the *Cotoneaster horizontalis* forms a neat bower above a pretty wood and iron bench.

Mrs Thorp still works in the garden with help only on Saturday mornings. Her garden is a masterclass in good structure and making the most of classic plants grown well. ☐

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Coates Manor,
Fittleworth, Sussex RH20 1ES.
Tel 01798 865356.
Open By appointment.

9 of the Thorps' favourite plants for winter interest

1 *Garrya elliptica*
The long, silver-grey tassels of this perfectly pruned, *Garrya elliptica* move constantly and lightly in the wind. 2.5-3m. RHS H4, USDA 8b[†].

2 *Mahonia* x *media* 'Charity'
Fantastic starbursts of bright yellow, strongly scented flowers December – March. 2.5-4m. RHS H4. USDA 7a-9b.

3 *Hedera colchica* 'Dentata Variegata'
This cream and green variegated ivy helps to light up the exterior of the house in winter. 5m. AGM*.

4 *Polystichum setiferum*
The finely cut architectural leaves of this fern look good throughout the winter. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

5 *Molinia caerulea* 'Moorflamme'
The bleached panicles of this deciduous grass form a soft, feathery mound that catches the winter sunlight in the walled garden. 1.2-1.8m. USDA 5a-8b.

6 *Buxus sempervirens*
This pair of tightly clipped box cubes with domed centres flank the path to the front door and help anchor the garden in winter. 4-8m. RHS H4, USDA 6a-8b.

7 *Helleborus foetidus*
Finely cut evergreen leaves look wonderful edged with frost and offer nodding, lime-green flowers from late winter to early spring. 45-60cm. USDA 5a-8b.

8 *Cephalotaxus harringtonia* var. *drupacea*
The Japanese plum yew forms a wonderful low mounding dome as you enter the rear garden. "It has a lightness that not all conifers have." 4-7m. USDA 6a-9b.

9 *Taxus baccata* 'Standishii'
This particularly dense, slow-growing, columnar form of golden yew has been tightly clipped into a glowing column. 1-1.8m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5b-9a.

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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
[†] Hardiness ratings given where available.

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5 & 7 JAN SMITH & JONATHAN BUCKLEY / GAP PHOTOS, 9 HOLMES GARDEN PHOTOS / ALAMY

In winter the flame-like, red and orange stems of willow and dogwood look stunning beside the lake at Wisley.

NICOLA STOCKEN TOMKINS / THE GARDEN COLLECTION

Winter at Wisley

Where better to look for winter-planting inspiration than the RHS Gardens at Wisley? Here you'll find colour, structure and surprising trails of scent

WORDS **LIA LEENDERTZ** PHOTOGRAPHS **SHARON PEARSON**

Lia Leendertz is an author, garden writer and allotmenteer who lives in Bristol. Lia is a regular contributor to *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph*, as well as GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

Despite a strong leaning towards the mini display garden, Wisley does not boast a winter garden of its own. This is entirely deliberate, according to its curator Colin Crosbie: "It's wonderful to visit a complete winter garden – I do love them – but as a gardener you have to think about how your garden will look for the rest of the year." Instead, Wisley's winter interest is peppered throughout the plantings, with a particular hot spot around the lakes, where a mass planting of flame-like cornus and salix stems lick up and are reflected in the calm waters.

The woodland also contains a great deal of winter interest, although here subtlety is the key. Colin feels that the architecture of the mature, bare trees and shrubs provides a great deal of low-key interest, and he places one or two real winter beauties in among them. "I like the winter plants to be hidden gems in the garden," says Colin. "The rest of the garden is asleep and the light levels are low, but you turn a corner and get a sudden glimpse of colour. It's so special."

The challenge is to make sure these plants don't block others in summer, and yet are not so hidden away they are themselves missed come winter. Some really warrant being placed centre stage, such as a stunning *Prunus rufa* with a gleaming copper-and-cream-striped trunk – Colin's desert island winter plant.

As an example of harmony of plant and position, Colin points at the path alongside the tree: the grass is almost entirely worn away. "People want to touch this tree. It has to be in a place where they can easily reach it." Their hands help polish the tree trunk, the oils on their hands making it ever more beautiful, and ever more irresistible.

Scent floats through the garden in pockets and streams. "Scent provides unexpected winter interest," says Colin. "It's unpredictable, but that makes it all the more magical when you catch it. If you are walking in a garden and you come across a drift of scent, you want to keep exploring." Daphnes he grows both for their looks and their scent, and he also loves the shape, flowers and 'sweet marmalade scent' of *Hamamelis*. *Sarcococca*, on the other hand, is grown almost entirely for its smell; its looks are merely tolerated. "It is a very dull thing. I never look at it. But the scent is phenomenal, and it makes a good, dark-green foil for other plants."

Although Colin has a long list of favoured winter plants, he recognises that most of us buy such things on impulse, and has a word of advice for anyone visiting their garden centre now. "This may be a good time to see what plants look great right now, and to buy great examples if you see them, but this is not a good planting time for most container plants. The ground can be waterlogged or frozen in the depths of winter, and that is not a very welcoming environment for a new plant. Your new plants will be happy and will continue to look good in pots, so wait until the soil starts to warm in March before planting them out. They will be much more content in the long run." □

- Turn the page for Colin Crosbie's choice of plants to give gardens winter interest.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available

12 winter highlights

1 *Acer griseum*
"This tree has glorious flaking bark in a rich reddy cinnamon," says Colin. "You just want to touch it. It's a perfect tree for a small garden and has beautiful foliage in summer, which takes on red and orange tints in autumn. 10m (height) x 10m (spread). AGM*. RHS H5, USDA 4a- 8b[†].

2 *Glycyrrhiza yunnanensis*
Come autumn, the leaves of this liquorice plant fall away and reveal the strange, angular, spaceship-like seedheads, which sit on the top of red branches all through winter. 1.2m x 90cm.

3 *Malus transitoria*
"A lovely small tree," says Colin, "covered in small gold berries all winter. The birds wait; it is one of the last berries they go for." Beautiful spring blossom and great autumn foliage give it interest all year too. 8m x 10m. AGM. RHS H6.

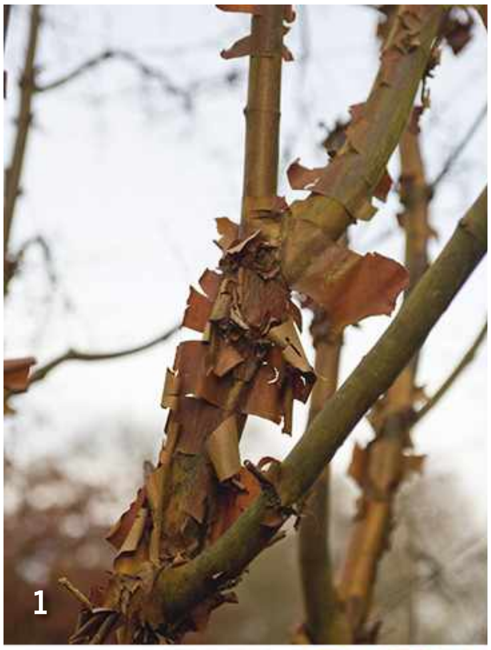
4 *Cornus sanguinea* 'Midwinter Fire'
Cut back hard each spring, this cornus produces stunningly colourful new bark, yellow at the base and a vibrant pink at the tips, making the whole bush look flame-like, particularly when planted en masse. 1.5m x 1.5m. RHS H4, USDA 4a-8b.

5 *Clematis cirrhosa* var. *balearica*
This clematis starts producing its pale, red-speckled flowers from December to February. Hanging flowers are seen best if the plant is trained over a pergola. Lovely ferny foliage is tinted bronze. 3m x 1.5m. RHS H3, USDA 7a-9b.

6 *Eucalyptus pauciflora*
The bark of this eucalypt is, says Colin: "like a jigsaw or a patchwork quilt of greys, browns and greens. It looks more beautiful in wintertime, as the low light brings the colours out." Not a tree for a small garden. 20m x 15m. USDA 8a-10b.

7 *Daphne bholua*
One of the finest scents of the winter garden, which Colin described as: "Light and dainty. Sweet, aromatic and spicy." This evergreen plant produces its delicate flowers through January and February and even into March. 3m x 1.5m.

8 *Betula albosinensis* 'Red Panda'
"This is one of the best of the red-barked birches," says Colin. "Intense peachy pink colours and rolls of bark that peel off like paper. Why buy a painting?" 25m x 10m. AGM.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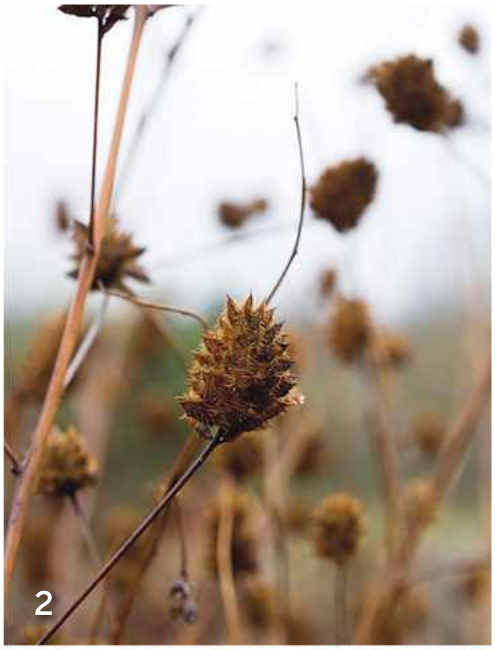
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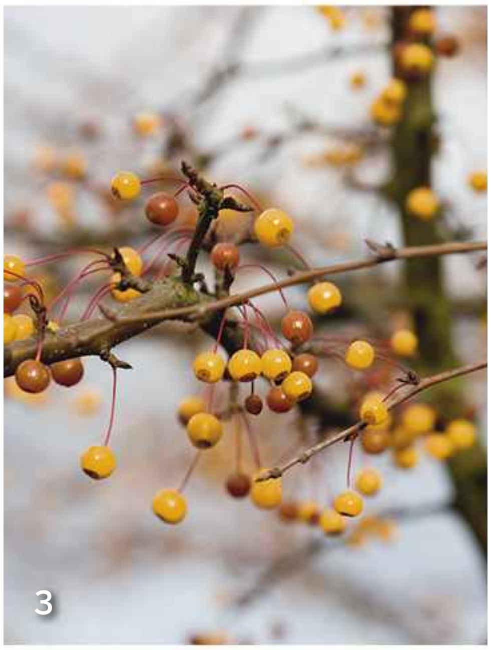
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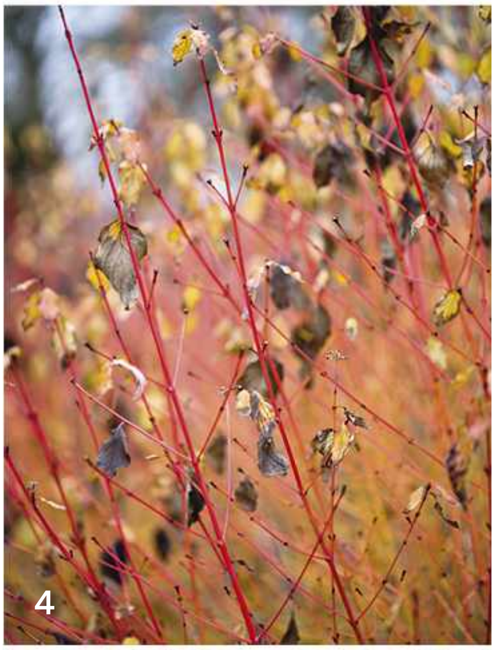
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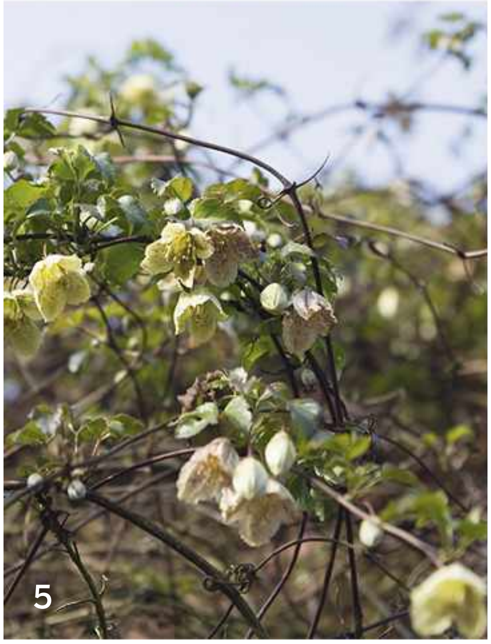
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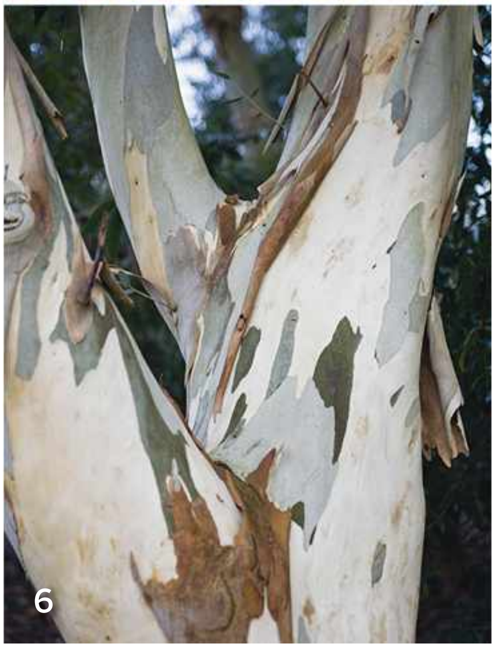
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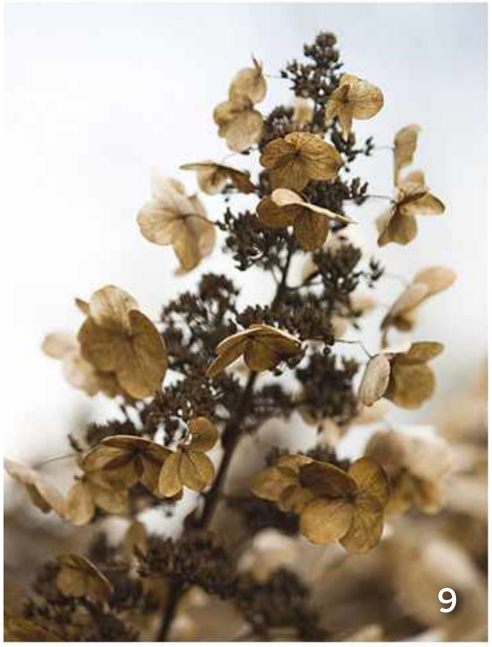

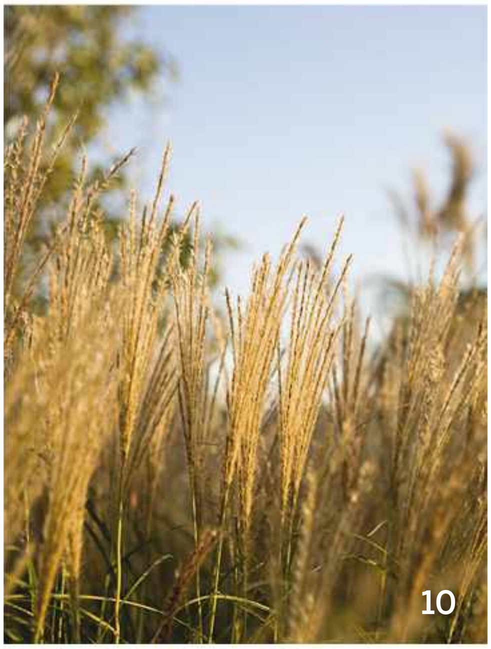

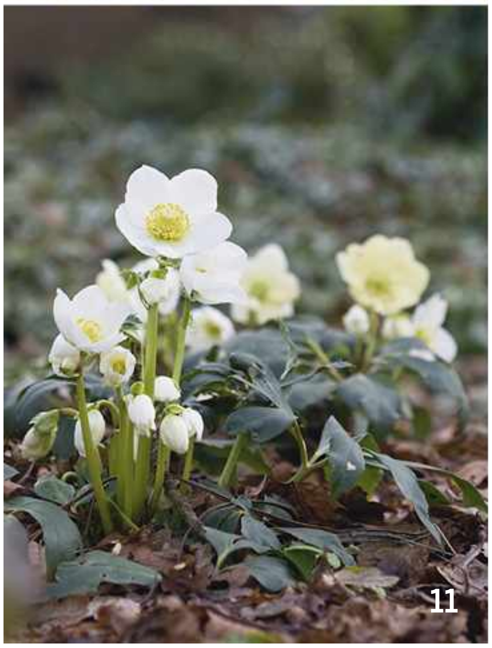

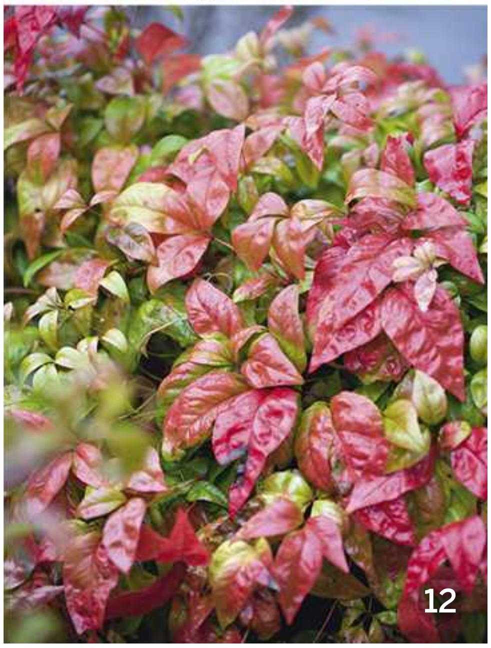

7 MARIANNE MAJERUS

9 *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Grandiflora'
"This hydrangea has lovely big panicles of flowers in summer, but it also dies well," says Colin. "The architectural flower heads fade to brown and cream, like a sepia photo of the summer flowers." 4m x 2.5m. USDA 3a-9b.

10 *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Yakushima Dwarf'
"This is one of those perennials whose profile is raised tenfold by a little bit of frost," says Colin. Lovely, silvery-brown flower spikes are beautifully architectural throughout winter. 60cm x 50cm. RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.

11 *Helleborus* 'HGC Josef Lember'
This is one of the earliest hellebores in the garden, in flower from December. "Its pure white flowers are more upwards facing than those of most hellebores. They fade to a lovely soft green." 30cm x 30cm. USDA 4b-8b.

12 *Nandina domestica* 'Fire Power'
"This evergreen plant has coral foliage that turns more intensely pink as the weather turns colder," says Colin. "It is compact enough to fit into the smallest garden." 45 x 60cm.

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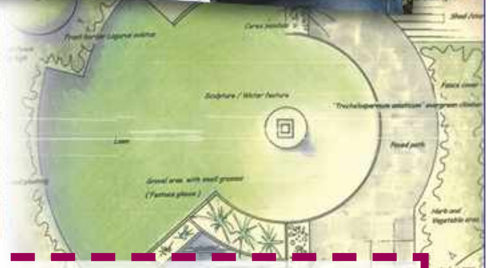

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GARDEN RESTORATION

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A major restoration of the Antrim Castle Gardens in Northern Ireland, by McQuitty Landscape Design, has re-established the castle's link to the town along the Six Mile Water river. The gardens, which have remnants of a 17th-century water garden, include a re-shaped Wilderness area and Victorian Pleasure Gardens that have been re-planted with shrubs and foliage plants. A new Courtyard Garden, planted with box, pleached lime and lavender, leads to the re-designed visitor centre.

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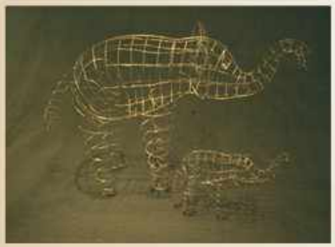

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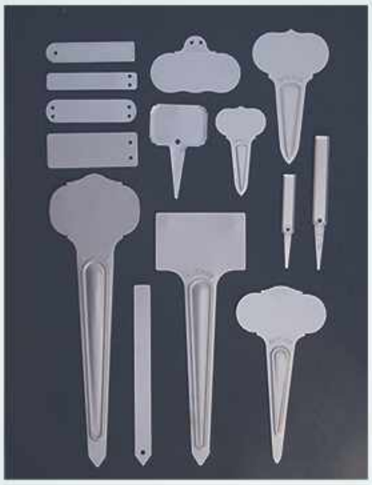

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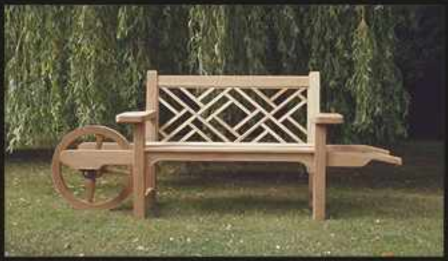

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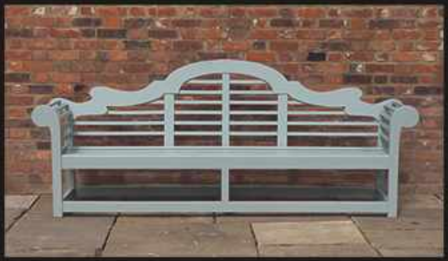

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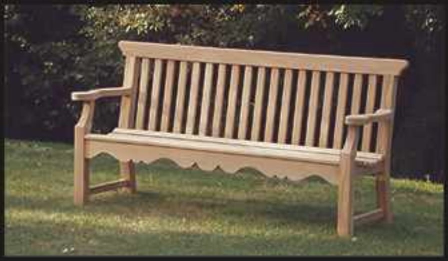

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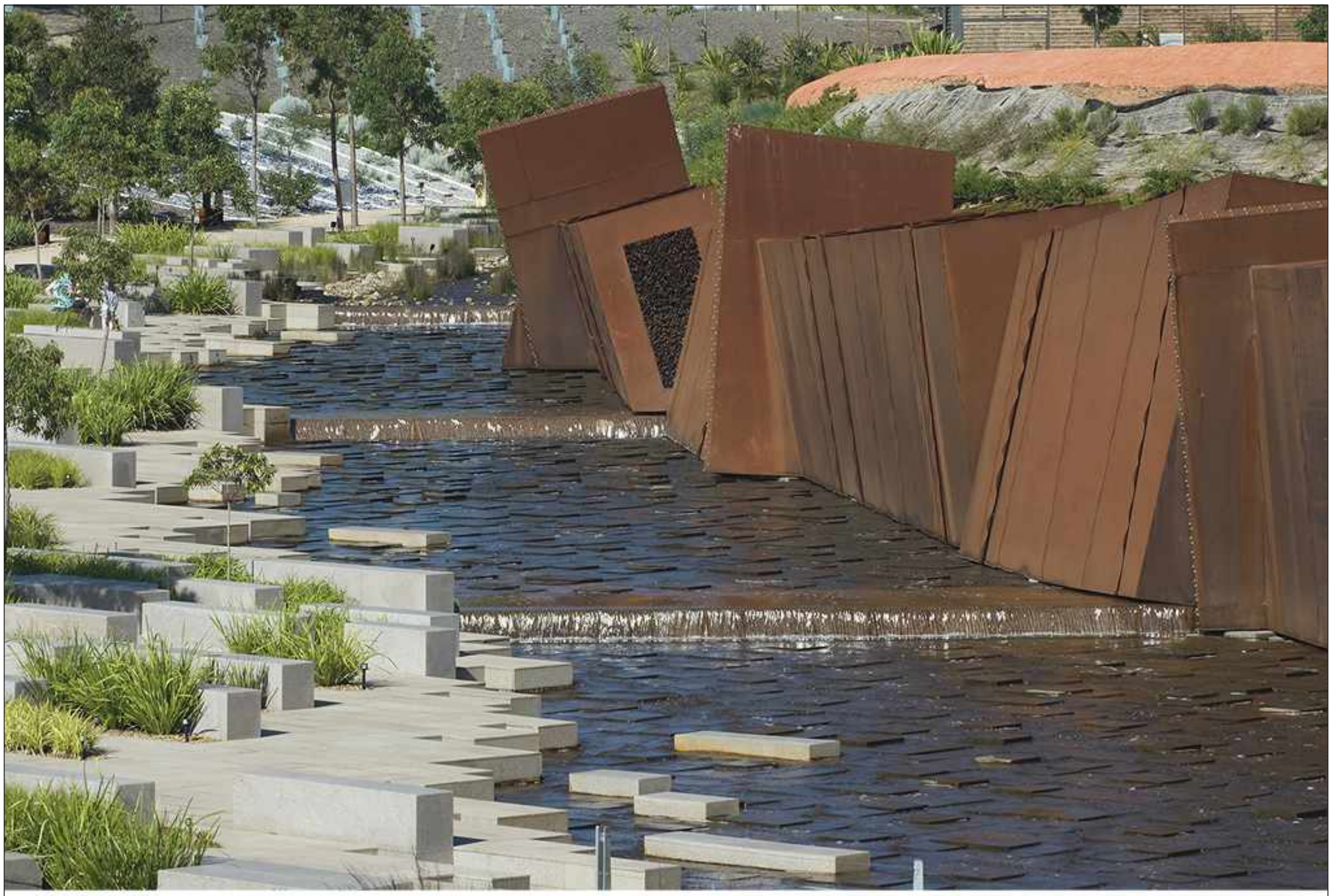


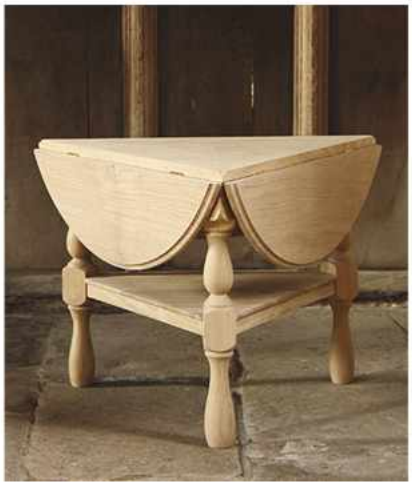
ARCHITECTURE PRIZE

Sunshine trail

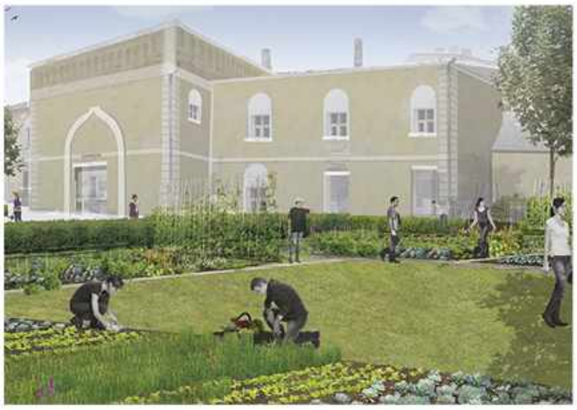
A boldly conceived botanical garden, built in a former sand quarry in Melbourne, has won this year's award for best landscape project at the World Architecture Festival (WAF) in Singapore. Designed by landscape studio Taylor Cullity Lethlean and plant expert Paul Thompson, the Australian Garden has been laid out as a journey through Australia's flora, from red-sand desert to the coast, and showcases some 170,000 species. The jury commended its 'originality and strong evocation of Australian identity'.

TWO TIMES TABLES

Garden designer Arne Maynard has added two beautifully crafted, round tables to his range of furniture suitable for house or garden. Inspired by a traditional design, the three-legged Cricket Table makes an ideal side-table while the lower Trinity Table (pictured) has outer flaps that fold down to form a triangle.



The Cricket Table is 74cm in diameter, 68cm high and costs £1,920; the Trinity Table is 82.5cm in diameter, 51cm high and costs £2,808. Tel 020 7689 8100, arnemaynard.com

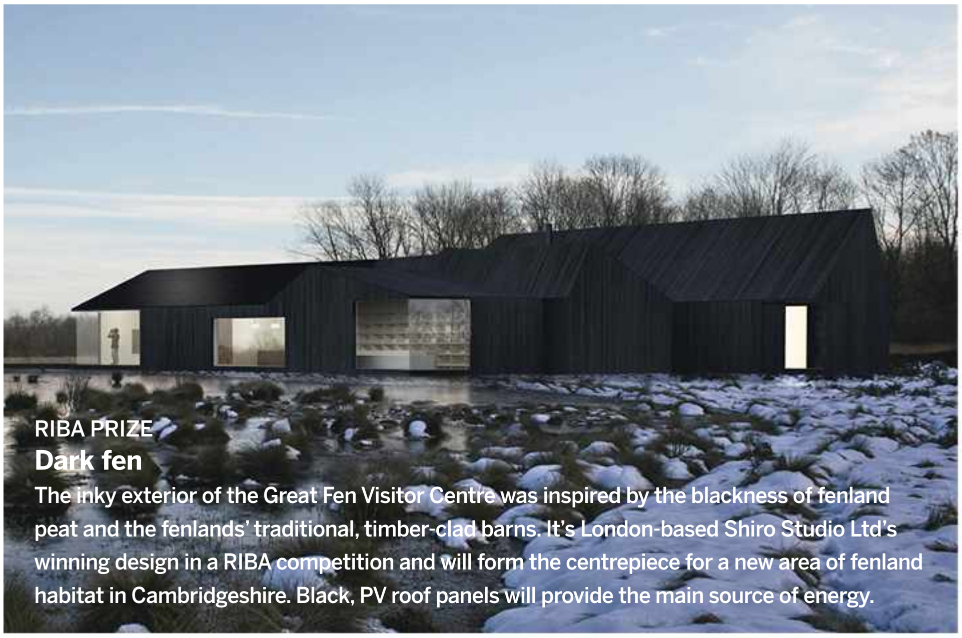


PUBLIC GARDEN TRANSFORMATION

Parks reunited

Moscow's Gorky Park is to be transformed by LDA Design, the company behind the London 2012 Olympic Park. The rejuvenation will reunite the two parts of the park, named after the writer Maxim Gorky, that contain two summerhouses by the 18th-century Russian architect Mikhail Kazakov and will create six new garden spaces including waterfront gardens, a cherry orchard and space for growing food, and nine activity hubs.

AUSTRALIAN GARDEN BY TAYLOR CULLITY LETHLEAN, KRISTY RAMAGE, LDA DESIGN



RIBA PRIZE

Dark fen

The inky exterior of the Great Fen Visitor Centre was inspired by the blackness of fenland peat and the fenlands' traditional, timber-clad barns. It's London-based Shiro Studio Ltd's winning design in a RIBA competition and will form the centrepiece for a new area of fenland habitat in Cambridgeshire. Black, PV roof panels will provide the main source of energy.

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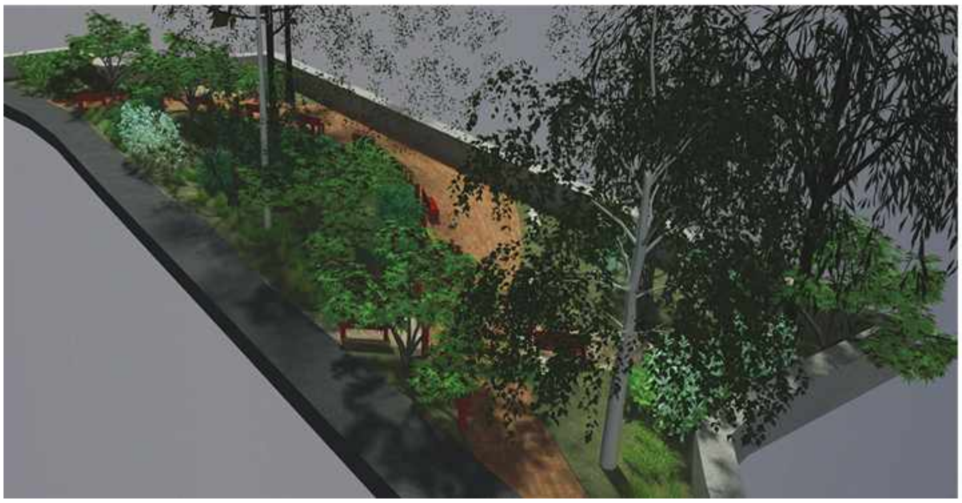

REDESIGN

Walk along the riverside

An unused riverfront section in Battersea Park that gives superb views across and down the Thames is to be opened up and re-landscaped. The Promontory Design Competition winner, David Keary of Keary-Coles-Design, has retained the Victorian character of the park, providing sculpted mounds between the existing trees and a string of benches and obelisks along the sweeping, paver path to encourage park users to promenade once more.

Notebook

- **Sayes Court, the site of John Evelyn's garden** at Deptford, southeast London, has been listed on the 2014 World Monuments Watch. It's hoped the garden will be included within the Convoys Wharf development plan for Deptford.
- **Award-winning Chelsea designer Diarmuid Gavin**, renowned for his quirky gardens, has teamed up with Frosts Garden Design and Construction to offer a complete design-and-build service to clients in the UK. gardendesignbyfrosts.com
- **The History of Garden History** (Volume 9), an RHS Occasional Paper from the RHS Lindley Library by Brent Elliott and Ted Fawcett, is now available at rhs.org.uk/occasionalpapers.
- **A new online design service**, using aerial mapping and questionnaires, offers tailored designs for whole gardens or just part of one, at low-cost prices (border design starts at £90). ExtraVert uses a team of qualified designers and can source plants as well. extravert.com
- **Explore Waddesdon Manor gardens as dusk falls** and follow the trail around six large-scale Bruce Munro light installations, including one suspended from the grotto ceiling in the Aviary. *Winter Light at Waddesdon: Bruce Munro*, Wed-Sun 10am-5pm, until 1 Jan; free for NT members, £8 adult, £4 child. Late night openings, until 8pm, take place Fri-Sun until 29 December. Tel 01296 653226, waddesdon.org.uk

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THE POSH SHED COMPANY

This Gothic shed makes a real statement with detailed facia boards and a Gothic gable over the door. Single opening windows are situated either side of the door with another on the left hand side, letting in lots of light. The roof is finished with cedar shingles and the walls are painted with Sandolin opaque timber protection in Wild Grape. This shed is 6ft 6" wide by 4ft 6" deep and 8ft 3" to the ridge, and is priced at £4,620.

WEB **theposhshedcompany.co.uk**

Storage solutions

While all is quiet on the gardening front, it's the ideal time to sort out that shed and bring some order to your garden clutter

WORDS ANNIE GUILFOYLE

Annie Guilfoyle is Director of Garden Design at KLC School of Design. She is also Garden Course Coordinator at West Dean College and runs her own garden design studio.

Just like interiors, gardens never seem to have quite enough storage space, no matter how large they are. Gardens often become the dumping ground for things that 'may come in useful one day' – believe me, I speak from experience. Winter is an excellent time to take stock of the situation, while the garden is going into the quiet period. At least now you have a chance to think about any changes you would like to make in the coming year.

The first step is to be brave and sort through the garden clutter – throw or give away anything that is not useful. When left with your pile of garden essentials you need to decide how best to store everything. Should the storage be completely dry or not? Soft furnishings, such as cushions, hammocks, umbrellas and shade sails, may get mouldy when stored in a damp place and it is impossible to shift the marks once this happens. Making a storage area dry or free of damp is a little more complicated but well worth the effort to keep the fabric looking pristine.

Could your old shed benefit from a spruce up? Sheds are relatively expensive items, so before you wield the sledgehammer think about whether it needs a new roof or a re-paint to give it a new lease of life. The simple addition of better shelving and more hooks to the interior could transform it, giving you more scope for storing gardening equipment and hanging tools.

When designing small gardens, I will try to incorporate as much storage as I possibly can. For example, built-in seating can be designed with a hinged lid and is ideal for stashing toys or tools. Stairs from a balcony provides a really useful space underneath, which is good for precious little other than storage. You can either design fitted cupboards to make use of this dead space, or alternatively you can use freestanding units. I have even designed recessed cupboards to fit into a retaining wall, when the space allows. For larger gardens why not position a number of storage locations throughout? This will save you walking to and fro, carrying furniture to the exact spot where you need it.

Ensure the storage design links with the overall style of your garden. For example, concealed cupboards finished with slatted wood look perfect in a contemporary setting. Whereas in the traditional garden, heritage paint colours combined with classic door fittings would be much more appropriate.

NEXT MONTH Design trends for 2014

1 A shed of one's own

Garden sheds are no longer the sad and dingy buildings of the past, tucked away apologetically behind the compost heap. Instead give an old shed a new lease of life with a few coats of paint and a handful of hooks, and you'll not only create more storage but also a garden sanctuary at the same time.

J S SIRA / GAP PHOTOS. DESIGN: CHERRY BURTON

2 Below deck

Garden decks generally have space beneath them that could be put to good use. Even if you only use a small proportion of the space around the edges, it not only gives you ample storage for things such as tools but it also helps conceal the unsightly construction.

3 Log on

A simple iron hoop makes a really stylish and functional wood store that works equally well both inside or out. If you place this in the garden make sure you put it somewhere very sheltered, such as underneath the eaves of the house so that the wood remains dry.

4 Built-in storage

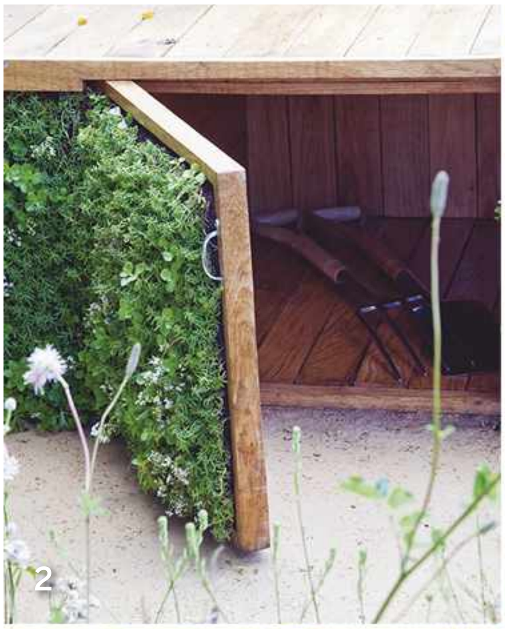
Seating with storage cupboards built in underneath is a practical use of space. It is worth taking the time to construct the cupboards so that they are completely watertight, that way you can conveniently store seat cushions and covers without the fabric becoming mouldy.

5 Pull-out cupboards

Making use of the space underneath steps or within retaining walls can offer many more possibilities for garden storage. These clever pull-out cupboards with concealed wheels can be used as a mobile potting bench, a handy tool store or even a secret drinks cabinet – or a combination of all three!

6 Bin store

One of my biggest gripes with front gardens is seeing those horrid plastic bins lining the street. Here is a simple and effective idea that not only conceals the bin but also provides you with a small herb garden on the top. Perfect if you have a sunny front garden.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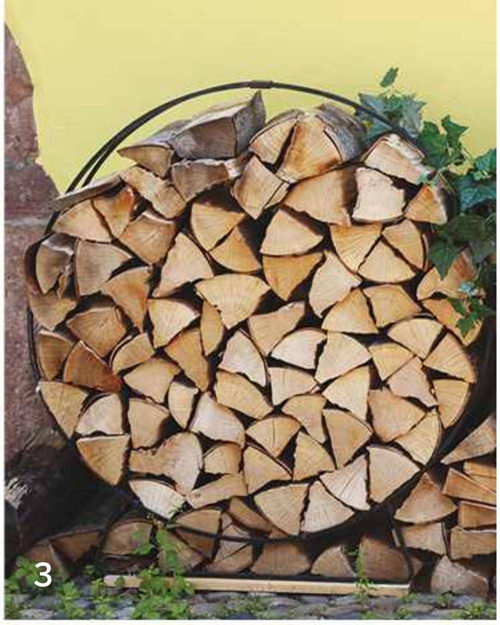
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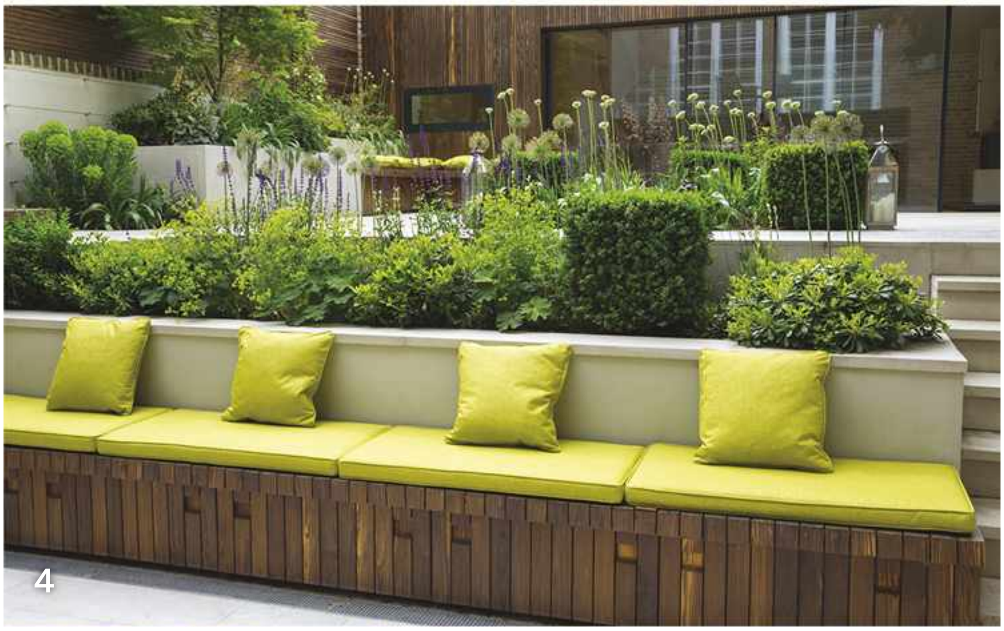
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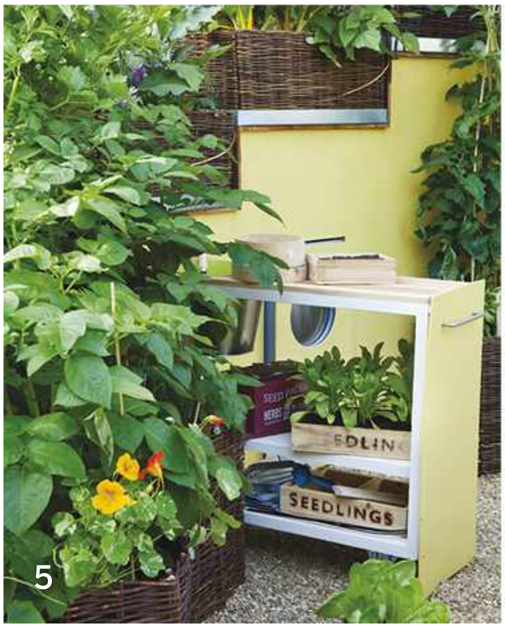
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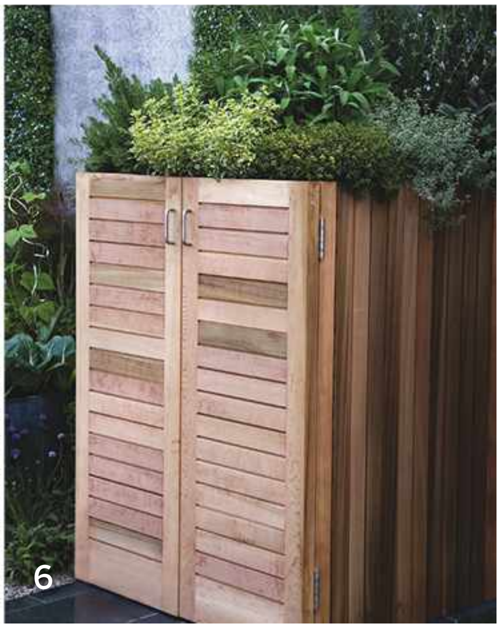
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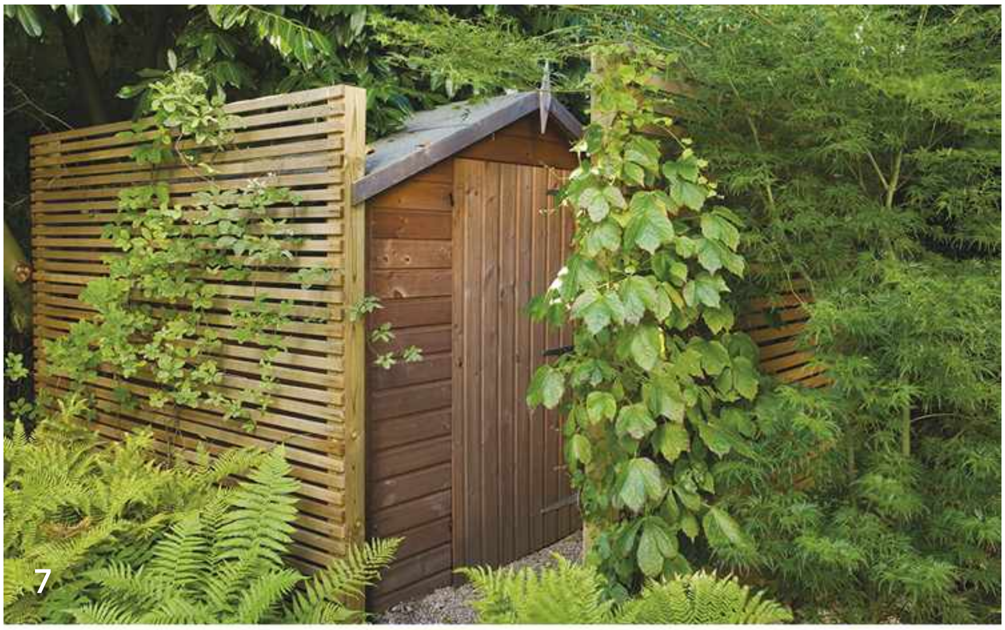
2 LYNN KEDDIE / GETTY, DESIGN: IAN ROCHEAD, 3 MARIANNE MAJERUS, 4 MARIANNE MAJERUS, DESIGN: EMMA GRIFFIN
5 MARIANNE MAJERUS, DESIGN: HEATHER CULPAN AND NICOLA REED, 6 LIZ EDDISON / GARDEN COLLECTION, DESIGN: MARK GREGORY / RHS CHELSEA 09



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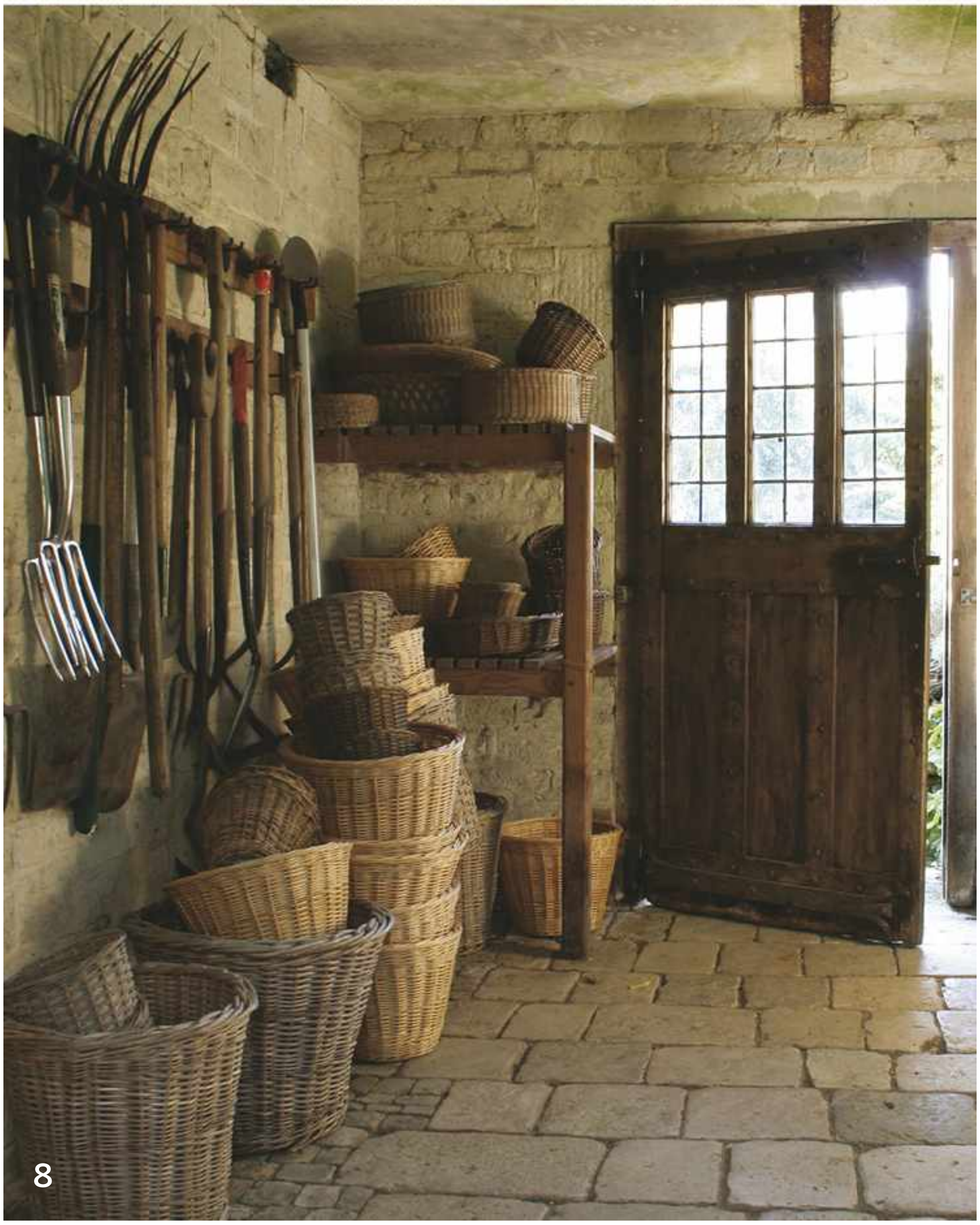

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7 MARIANNE MAJERUS, DESIGN: LYNNE MARCUS. 8 ANNIE GUILFOYLE

7 Screening off the shed

If your shed is not so bijou, you may want to screen it off from the rest of the garden. This screen is made from horizontal, wooden slats screwed into posts. There is a small gap or shadow line between the slats, which allows climbing plants to twine through.

8 Hang out

This wonderfully organised tool store is in the stunning grounds of Parham House, in West Sussex. Use plenty of wall hooks in your tool store to maximise the storage space. Have a seasonal sort through, making space for essentials and getting rid of the clutter. You know it makes sense.

Where to buy

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Store
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Taylors Garden Buildings
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01892 861202, sparrowandfinch.co.uk

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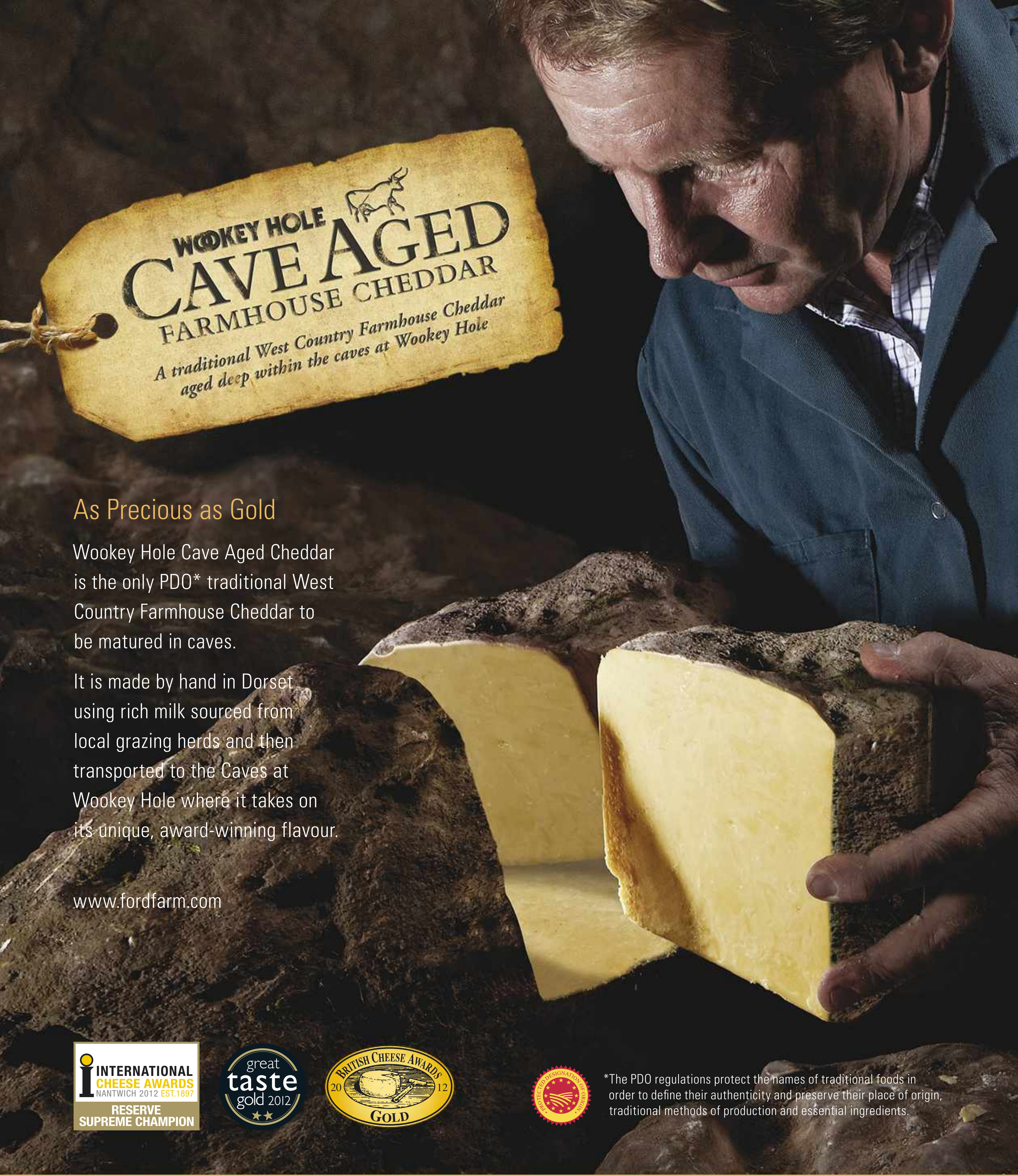
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Book reviews, readers' letters, Christmas crossword, reader offers, stockists

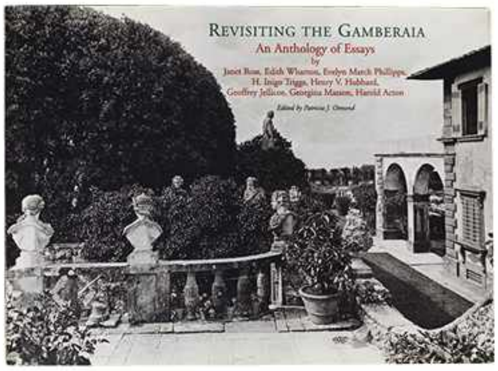
A good read

A passion for Pope and the pastoral poets ignited garden historian and writer Tim Richardson's love of great gardens. Here he shares his ten most treasured books to combine both pleasures

PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREW MONTGOMERY**

Books special

I spend all my time surrounded by books. For the past decade or so my 'office' has not been at my home but in the rare-books reading room of the British Library, where one can order up any book in English. I like that feeling – it concentrates the mind, and I've written 13 books now while sitting at those desks. My first job was based in two places: the RHS's Lindley Library and the Herbarium Library at Kew. I even got into gardens through books. Studying English at Oxford, I realised that Alexander Pope and the other 18th-century poets I loved were all garden mad, so I went back to visit some of the National Trust properties – notably Studley Royal and Stourhead – which I had been taken to see as a child. I suddenly realised that despite all the lavender bags on sale in the shop, these landscapes were massive, walk-through, ever-changing versions of the art installations that were all the rage in the 1980s. Less fashionable, certainly, but much better all round. Later, I came to make the connection between my own interest in gardens and my family background, since my grandfather, great-grandfather and great-uncles had all been head gardeners at estates, living at lodges by entrance gates. And that's where I'm happiest, metaphorically speaking: as the garden writer encamped at the gates, one foot in the garden, the other in the library.



REVISITING THE GAMBERAIA
An Anthology of Essays
by
Janet Ross, Edith Wharton, Evelyn March Phillipps,
H. Inigo Triggs, Henry V. Hubbard,
Geoffrey Jellicoe, Georgina Masson, Harold Acton
Edited by Patricia J. Osmond

FOR FOREIGN GARDEN ROMANCE

Revisiting the Gamberaia
edited by Patricia J Osmond

Some books exist primarily to catapult you back into the atmosphere of a much-loved garden, and this is a near-perfect example of the genre. Villa Gamberaia is a great Renaissance garden, with 20th-century additions, set above Florence in the hillside village of Settignano. It is one of the masterpieces of world garden design, still in private hands, and I am a frequent visitor.

It's my favourite garden away from the British Isles and I never tire of exploring spaces such as the long 'bowling green', the water parterre, nymphaeum and 'cabinetto' of water tricks and grotwork. The way the garden slots together is a near miracle and the Edwardian photographs perfectly reproduced in this volume capture the magic of the composition as well as the detail.

The discerning editor has also reprinted the best essays on the garden, by the likes of Geoffrey Jellicoe, Harold Acton, Edith Wharton and Georgina Masson.

Smashed by the Nazis in the Second World War, the garden has been gently revived by a single family ever since, preserving its singular atmosphere. This book makes one wish for the invention of a teleport system.

FOR GARDEN HISTORIANS

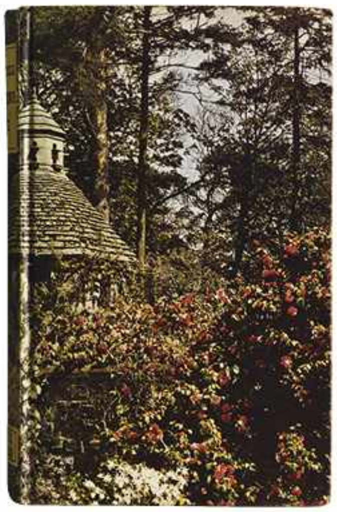
The Shell Gardens Book

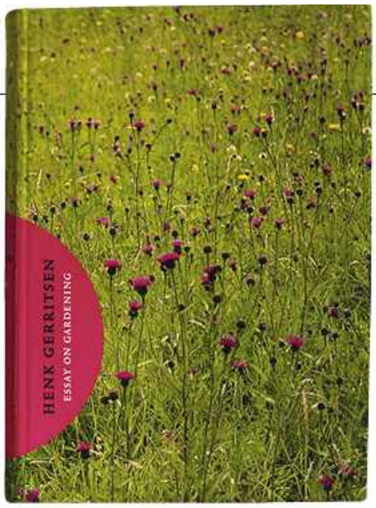
edited by Peter Hunt

Published in 1964, this chunky little tome effectively kickstarted garden history as a serious branch of study and is still useful today, with its comprehensive glossary of garden features, biographies of garden designers and list of good gardens to visit. Ignore the cheesy petrol-station title; Shell published good books back then. In some ways it has never been superseded, though you can pick up second-hand copies extremely cheaply (mine is pencilled '£2').

The editor, Peter Hunt, enlisted the help of all the best writers on garden history – including Alice Coats, the historian of plant-hunting, Miles Hadfield and Graham Stuart Thomas – and in the process created a sense of community among researchers. It is no coincidence that the following year Hunt founded The Garden History Society (in the tea room of the Charing Cross Hotel), which remains today the pre-eminent international organisation in this field.

Looking through this book today, one can find remarkably few instances of inaccuracy as well as substantial entries on still-overlooked topics such as garden walls, balustrades, 'greenhouse corridors', stove houses, iris gardens and pineta.





FOR MODERN PLANTING

Essay on Gardening

by Henk Gerritsen

Garden designers like to produce copiously illustrated digests of their own work (and in some cases their own life), the majority of which amount to self-indulgent vanity publications bereft of any real insight. This book is different. Published by the Amsterdam bookshop Architectura & Natura in 2008, the (deceptively) modestly titled *Essay on Gardening* has already gained cult status among cognoscenti of naturalistic planting design.

An early collaborator of Piet Oudolf's, the late Henk Gerritsen was a key member of the 'Dutch Wave' of planting designers who promoted the style that came to be known as New Perennials, which has had such an influence on British garden style over the past few decades.

This is an idiosyncratic, opinionated, polemical broadside of a book, with sub-chapters such as, 'Gardening Like a Cow' and 'Don't Whinge!' It's refreshing to come across a writer and plantsman with genuinely original views. And the book is beautifully produced, replete with photographs on matt paper, hand-drawn illustrations and attractive design.

All it says on the back cover is: 'A garden book like none other, exalting the sublimity of aphids and gnawed leaves.' Enough said.

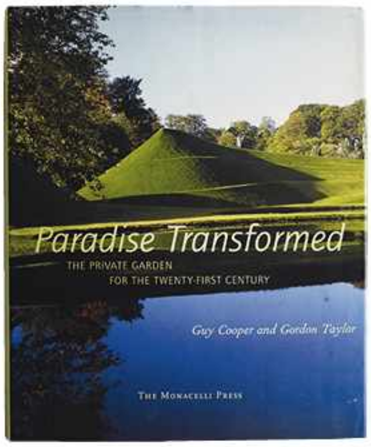
FOR THE THRILL OF THE NEW

Paradise Transformed

by Guy Cooper and Gordon Taylor

This seminal book was an important touchstone for me when it appeared in 1996. I was just beginning to think about contemporary landscape design and it was as a result of seeing images of Charles Jencks's Garden of Cosmic Speculation in this book that I wrote the first serious article published about that garden, in *Country Life*.

Cooper and Taylor had taken it upon themselves to travel the world visiting and photographing innovative new work by designers including Vladimir Sitta (Australia), Shodo Suzuki (Japan), Fernando Caruncho (Spain) and Topher Delaney (USA).



The book was packed with new things, all brought together excitingly for the first time. It inspired me to add contemporary landscape design to my own list of specialisms – no longer the 18th-century garden only – and my second book was a monograph on the work of Martha Schwartz. In subsequent books I named and defined a new movement: 'conceptual' landscape and garden design. *Paradise Transformed* was transformative, too, in that it made me far more internationalist in outlook: I've now met, and experienced the work of, most of the designers featured in that book. In retrospect, *Paradise Transformed* was a kind of challenge. ▷

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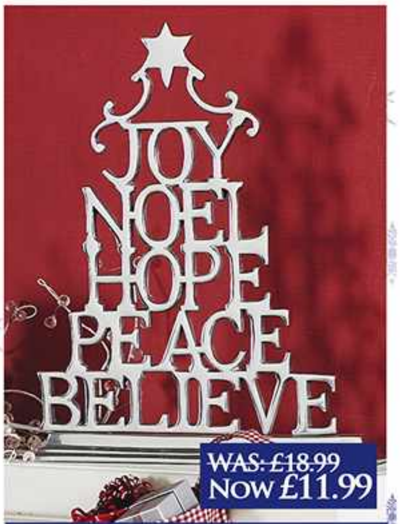

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FOR BOOK LOVERS

Derek Jarman's Garden

by Derek Jarman

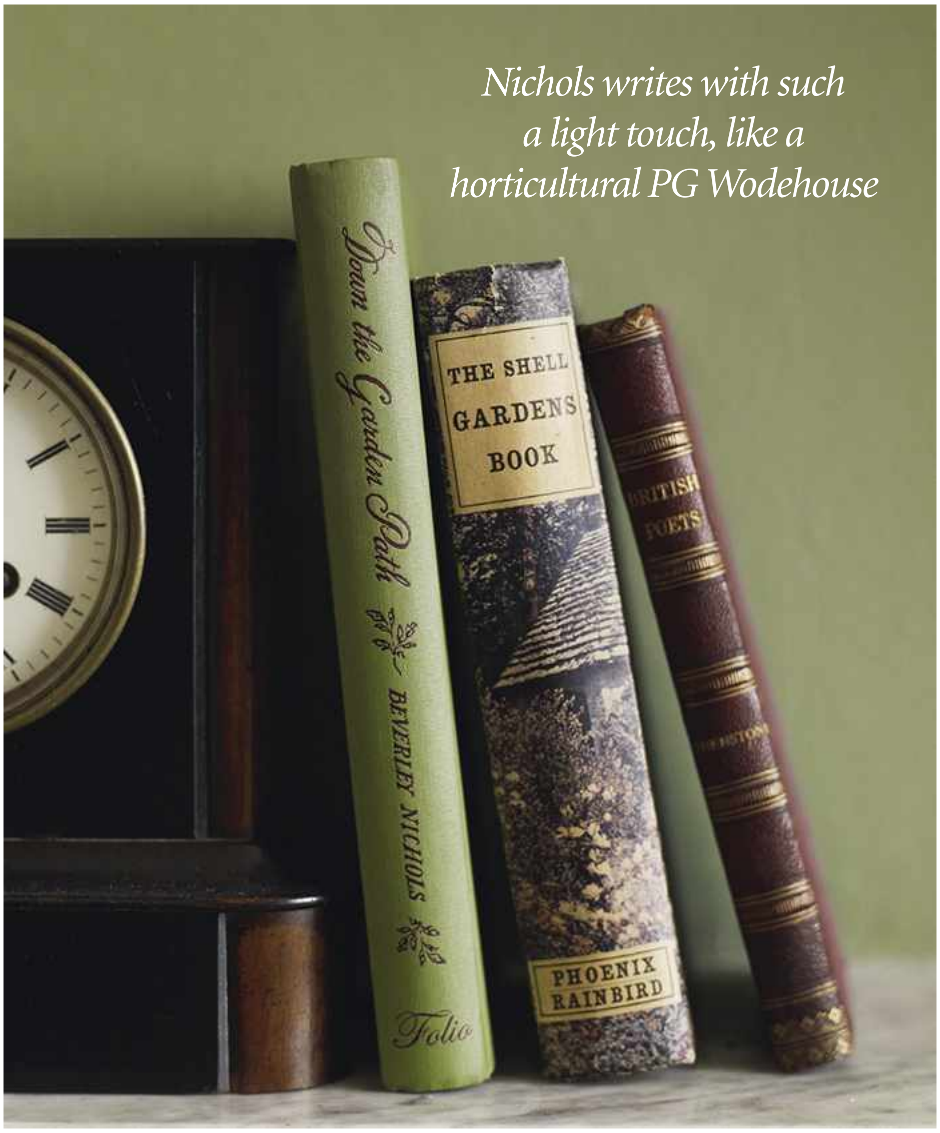
Published in 1995, the year after the film-maker's death, as the chronicle of the extraordinary beach garden at Dungeness he created from 1986, this is still for my money the best book on gardens produced in the second half of the 20th century. Howard Sooley's photographs were well ahead of the curve in terms of style. They capture the special atmosphere of the place as well as the sheer originality of Jarman's pebble and flotsam sculptures and maritime plantings – sea kale, valerian, broom. Jarman's text, in which he compares himself to a shaman while also poking fun at himself, is extremely moving in places: 'The storms have blown salt tears, burning my garden, Gethsemane and Eden.' Books like this reassure me that the e-book will never wholly replace the printed version.

FOR GARDEN COMEDY

Down the Garden Path

by Beverley Nichols

A great laugh – and you can't say that about too many volumes on the gardener's bookshelf. It follows the travails of a new garden owner, battling with the weather, the damnable plants themselves and recalcitrant or incompetent servants (this being written in 1932). Nichols writes with such a light touch, like a horticultural PG Wodehouse. His Bertie Woosterish narrator enters the realm of the garden in a sort of daze, trying out all kinds of plants as well as goldfish (which disappear into his pond and reappear, completely black). One of my favourite moments comes immediately after a rather lyrical description of the garden scene, when Nichols disarmingly adds: 'Of course, one could go on like this *ad infinitum*'. It gloriously undercuts the author's own skill while adding to the reader's sense that this is an authentic narrative (how humourless one can become when writing about comedy!)



Nichols writes with such a light touch, like a horticultural PG Wodehouse

FOR WIT AND WISDOM

Poetical Works and *Unconnected Thoughts on Gardening*

by William Shenstone

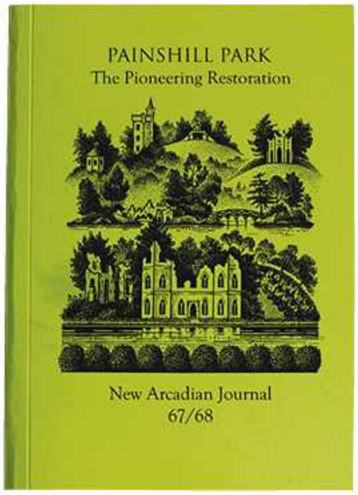
I love Shenstone. He was an 18th-century poet who created a celebrated garden at his home, The Leasowes, near Birmingham. Uniquely, Shenstone incorporated his own verses in the garden by means of placards and signs hung up in, or next to, the modest garden buildings and features which were all he could afford to make. But his originality and wit, which shine through in his poems about nymphs and swains, found him the fame and approbation he so craved – and visitors. Shenstone was both desperate for attention and also extremely sensitive to perceived criticism. To make matters worse, he lived next to a far grander property, Hagley Hall, seat of Lord Lyttelton, who had the money and land to realise a landscape garden on a far greater scale, and liked to tease his prickly neighbour by taking visitors on a tour of the garden – in the wrong order. Perhaps his greatest legacy is *Unconnected Thoughts…*, a series of aphoristic but practical statements about gardening that still stand up to scrutiny. Try this: 'Apparent art, in its proper province, is almost as important as apparent nature. They contrast agreeably; but their provinces ever should be kept distinct.' ▷

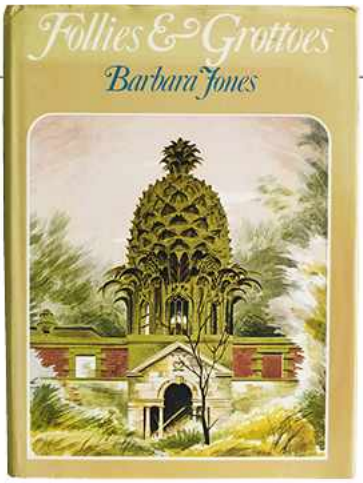
FOR GARDEN POLITICS

The New Arcadian Journal
edited by Patrick Eyres

The New Arcadian Press was founded in 1981 by the Leeds-based art and landscape historian Patrick Eyres, and the limited-edition *NAJ* is its annual flagship publication. Always a beautifully produced gem of a book in A5 format, the journals have elegant but modern-looking woodblock illustrations and usually contain highly original contributions by multiple collaborators. The 18th-century landscape garden remains the abiding editorial obsession (mirroring my own), with recent issues covering topics, such as the blackamoor in Georgian gardens and a special issue on Painshill Park, in Surrey, a garden that is dear to my own heart.

Over the years the *NAJ* has focused on various other favourite gardens, including Studley Royal, Hackfall and Stowe, as well as publishing original additions to the scholarly literature on the sculptor and 'concrete poet' Ian Hamilton Finlay and his great Scottish garden Little Sparta. Eyres has never shied away from the theme of politics in gardens. This has been a great influence on me, inspiring new research that culminated in my own book on the landscape garden: *The Arcadian Friends*.





FOR GARDEN QUIRKS

Follies and Grottoes
by Barbara Jones

Few books can fairly be described as 'seminal' but this encyclopedia-scale volume, first published in 1953 and updated in the 1970s, truly fits the bill. It was a real labour of love and an act of great generosity to the gardens world, the result of a vast amount of original research and months of tramping through fields and woodland looking for sometimes hidden or otherwise elusive garden buildings.

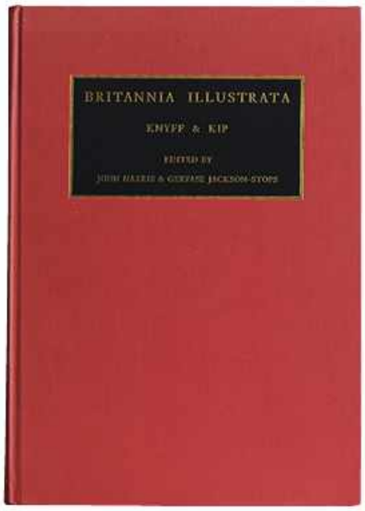
Folklorist Barbara Jones was an interesting person in her own right and the subject of a biography published this year. Her mission here was to identify and celebrate this intriguing subset of architectural and garden history, and she went about the cause with gusto and wit.

Roothouses, towers, hermitages, temples, obelisks, mock castles – all were subject to her scrutiny, with a county-by-county gazetteer of garden buildings taking up about a quarter of the book. She missed out surprisingly few 'follies' given the fact she was starting almost from scratch, and inspired people to value buildings which might be considered disposable fripperies. A typical sentence – in the chapter 'Cones, Bones & Druids' – reads: 'The Treacle Eater is both arch and tower, standing on the crest of a hill east of the house.' Who could not love a Treacle Eater?

FOR ILLUSTRATIONS OF GARDENS

Vitruvius Britannicus
by Colen Campbell and
Britannia Illustrata

Modern reprints of these classic early 18th-century sourcebooks of architectural and garden plans are available, and I have them on my shelves, but to see the detail you have to go to a library to peruse the originals: vast tomes in leather-bound volumes. It is in these bird's-eye views of estates – many of them by the Dutch team of 'Knyff and Kip' – that you can see the genesis of the English landscape garden, in the way formal gardens began to be nuanced with serpentine walks through woodland, orchards planted for pleasure, and statuary, fountains or garden temples hidden away in the garden's glades. I find these books a source of constant revelation, as some new aspect of a garden such as Dyrham Park, Longleat or Temple Newsam makes itself apparent. And the books themselves are a delight to handle, as you carefully turn the pages, absorbed into the landscape lavishly unfolding before you, transported for a moment to the era of Queen Anne or George I. I remember thinking that I might save up and treat myself to a copy of *Vitruvius Britannicus*, since I use it so much. The cheapest copy available was £28,000. Hmm. Back to the library. ▷



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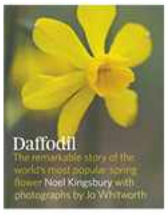
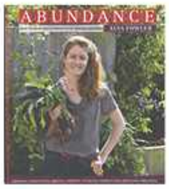
Books special

GARDENS ILLUSTRATED's 12 favourite books of 2013


Daffodil
The remarkable story of the world's most popular spring flower Noel Kingsbury with photographs by Jo Whitworth

DAFFODIL
by Noël Kingsbury
'A fascinating, up-beat book with floral sunshine on every page. One you will look at again and again.' Review *Matthew Biggs* **Timber Press, £17.99 – *offer price £16.99.* ISBN 978-1604693188**



ABUNDANCE
by Alys Fowler
'A comprehensive guide to storing and preserving garden produce… suffused from start to finish with Alys's distinctive brand of irreverent, intelligent eco-chic.' Review *Jodie Jones* **Kyle Books, £16.99 – *offer price £15.29.* ISBN 978-0857830784**

THE SPEEDY VEGETABLE GARDEN

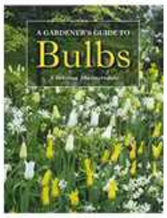
THE SPEEDY VEGETABLE GARDEN
by Mark Diacono and Lia Leendertz
'A book to order and have at your side when you are poring over seed catalogues.' Review *Lila Das Gupta*
Timber Press, £14.99 – *offer price £13.50.* ISBN 978-1604693263

The New English Garden

THE NEW ENGLISH GARDEN
by Tim Richardson
'Intelligent, thought-provoking and occasionally contentious.' Review *Ambra Edwards* **Frances Lincoln, £40 – *offer price £37.* ISBN 978-0711232709**

Piet Oudolf & Noel Kingsbury
Planting

PLANTING PERSPECTIVES
by Piet Oudolf and Noël Kingsbury
'A fascinating insight into Piet Oudolf's approach to design.' Review *Rory DuSoir*
Timber Press, £30 – *offer price £27.50.* ISBN 978-1604693706


A GARDENER'S GUIDE TO
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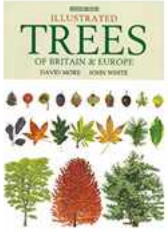
GARDENER'S GUIDE TO BULBS
by Christine Skelmersdale
'This lavish guide is a cut above most others on the market.' Review *Martyn Cox*
The Crowood Press Ltd, £25 – *offer price £23.50.* ISBN 978-1847973764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by David More and John White
'The most authoritative guide to trees.' Review *Dr Phil Gates*
Bloomsbury, £35 – *offer price £32.50.* ISBN 978-1408123669

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Wild FLOWERS

WILD FLOWERS: NATURE'S OWN TO GARDEN GROWN
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'An appealing turn of phrase backed up by a wealth of horticultural knowledge.' Review *Stephanie Donaldson*
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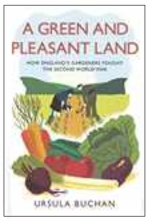
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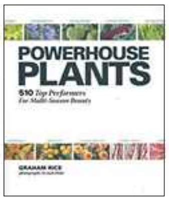
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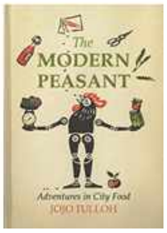
'An excellent present for a novice gardener who is unsure what to grow.' Review *Val Bourne* **Timber Press, £16.99 – *offer price £15.29.* ISBN 978-1604692105**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THE MODERN PEASANT
by Jojo Tulloh
'A must for any foodie; my copy is already stained with mud and olive oil, which must be a good sign.' Review *Alys Fowler* **Chatto & Windus, £16.99 – *offer price £14.99.* ISBN 978-0701186685**

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Letters

Have your say – we'd like to hear your views, so please write to us at: GARDENS ILLUSTRATED, 9th Floor, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN, or email letters@gardensillustrated.com

Star letter

Protect and survive

As a reader of GARDENS ILLUSTRATED I wanted to pass on five things readers can do to help to save their prized trees from attack of ash dieback (*Chalara fraxinea*):

1. Keep the canopy area – that is the whole area under the tree up to the drip line on the outside edge of the leaf canopy – clear of weeds and grass.
2. Keep the soil clear of fallen leaves (the spores of fungal disease will sit on leaves and be bounced about and spread by rain or footfall).
3. Deeply aerate the soil with a fork so that there is no compaction.
4. Mulch the whole area of the tree canopy with a 10cm-deep pure mulch – preferably pure willow mulch.
5. Fertilise the soil with a carbon-based fertiliser such as GroChar.

This five-point treatment will help trees against all manner of nascent diseases because together, they help relieve the tree from stress. When stressed by environmental factors a tree will, just like a human being, be less resistant to disease. And in a tree's case, less resistant to attack by root fungi, phytophthora diseases or other fungal attack, such as honey fungus and ash dieback.

Griselda Kerr, Derbyshire

ED'S REPLY: We asked Kew's tree expert Tony Kirkham his thoughts on Griselda's advice and he agreed that all her measures would be useful actions in the fight against disease spread.

GARDEN INITIATIVE

Helping hand

On a recent visit to St Mary's Secret Garden in Hackney, east London, I bought several perennial plants, all beautifully grown and very reasonably priced. This small charity, which opens its gardens and shop to the public on weekdays, provides training in horticulture for adults with learning disabilities. It's encouraging to see that Great Dixter sources some of the plants it sells in its nursery from Friary Gardeners, a similar charity in Hastings. It would be great to see more retailers build similar relationships with local gardening charities. Support from the commercial horticultural industry would raise some income for these charities and help promote the valuable work they do in our communities.

Sian Rees, by email

PRIZE WINNER

Seeds of change

Some time ago GARDENS ILLUSTRATED came with a free packet of bright blue larkspur seeds. I rather belatedly planted them in a row next to my climbing French beans. They flowered for weeks and were a stunning bright, summer-sky blue. I entered them in the local flower show in the 'Vase of Annuals – One Variety Class', and to my great pleasure they won first prize. There are many keen gardeners in our village, so I felt particularly pleased. I'm saving some seed and hope to enjoy the larkspur again next year. Thank you GARDENS ILLUSTRATED.

Helen Comrie, Somerset

ED'S REPLY: Congratulations on your win. It's lovely to hear that you've had such success growing seeds from the magazine. We're planning to offer more fabulous seeds in our May, August and September issues next year, so look out for those.

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TALKING POINT

Conserving wild species is vital if breeders are to create more productive crops

Dr Paul Smith is head of Seed Conservation at Kew's Millennium Seed Bank, which stores thousands of seed samples.

Recent studies suggest that at least 20 per cent of the world's plant species are threatened with extinction in the wild. This has prompted the world's two global seed banks to join forces to collect and conserve the wild relatives of our major crops. Crop wild relatives (CWRs) are a source of useful characteristics, such as disease resistance and drought tolerance, that crop breeders can use to develop more resilient crop varieties for the future. Over the next seven years, with financial support from the Norwegian government, the Global Crop Diversity Trust's Svalbard Seed Vault and Kew's Millennium Seed Bank will focus their efforts on the CWRs of 29 of the world's major crops, including wheat, rice and maize. More than half of these CWRs are not yet conserved in seed banks, and a fifth of them are threatened in the wild. The potential value of these species to crop breeders is estimated to be US$120 billion making it imperative that their seeds are banked and kept safe for future generations.

- What's your view? Write to us by post or email (details above). We reserve the right to edit letters.

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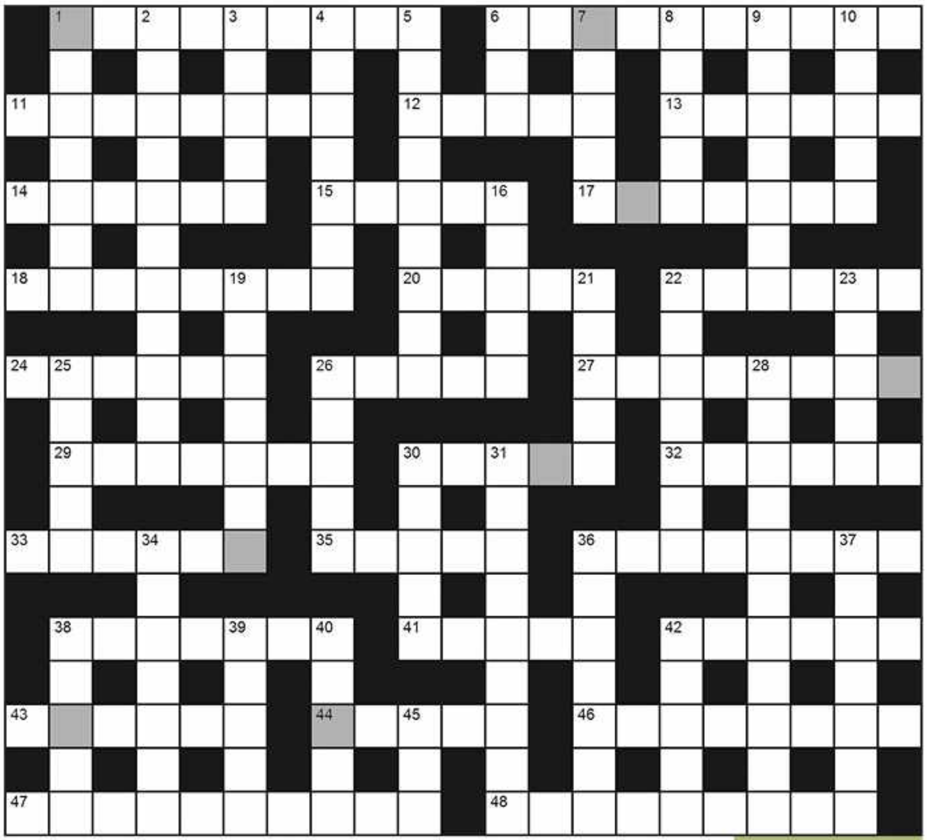
Christmas crossword



Solve our festive puzzle for gardeners and you could win a magnum of champagne

ACROSS

1/45 *Sarcococca*, a fragrant, winter-flowering shrub – present at this time of year! (9,3)
6 Plant commonly called tree ivy – turns after shade (10)
11 Downpour – part of terrain fallow (8)
12 Annually beheaded, so not late! (5)
13 A solitary-flowering snowdrop – which exerts an attraction (6)
14 The mistletoe genus produces v odd music! (6)
15 Berry-bearing tree for a senior citizen (5)
17 Salad plants even Sid cultivated! (7)
18 Tuberous perennial: ____ *coum* is the winter species (8)
20 Woman in bluebell enclosure (5)
22 Try elm, maybe, for this fragrant-smelling evergreen (6)
24 Regular Christmas book? Could be a French marigold (6)
26 Removes seed's outer covering – Humberside city's (5)
27 Alternative name for dittany, where eg propane is made? (3,5)
29 Broadleaf trees said to be seaside features (7)
30 The chickpea genus – nicer with a new top (5)
32 Part of lawn in garden, which provides overhead weather protection! (6)
33 He's holding, erm, a compact summer cabbage (6)
35 Use machine to cut grass in awkward place: street edge (5)
36 Flag, though not the flower, with three colours (8)
38 Series of autumn/early winter cyclamen – an amazing event (7)
41 Tree fruit in lilac or nasturtiums (5)
42 Old landscape gardener Humphry – agent with weight (6)
43 People in general, welcomed by NGS members (6)
44 Eg general growing appearance of a plant I put in recycled bath (5)
46 Sort of plant that requires hothouse conditions in the UK (8)
47 Evergreen perennial with brightly coloured leaves and small flowers, I put in a green box, perhaps (7,3)
48 Love-in-a-mist is *Nigella* ___ (9)

DOWN

1 The status of the RHS – racy hit maybe (7)
2 Method of cultivating tomato plants in bottomless pots (4,7)
3 Mass of bees are moderately hot after sun! (5)
4 Aaron's rod is another name for this *Verbascum* plant (7)
5 Plant in *Veronica* genus – rush in good health? (9)
6 See 25 down
7 Aromatic shrub which (one hears) marches on! (5)
8 Warm and damp (5)
9 Turned the soil producing dour veg! (3,4)
10 Right to replace first of leeks (smells terrible!) (5)
16 Luxury vehicle flattens bumps in lawn! (5)
19 Puts manure, straw etc around base of plants (7)
21 Christmas rose is *Helleborus* ___ (5)
22 The grape hyacinth (7)
23 Flax fabric in cordyline, now (5)
25/6 Evergreen tree, *Abies procera*, left in bonfire sadly (5,3)
26 They provide a flexible supply of water (5)
28 Perennial saxifrage, in old Pernod, possibly (6,5)
30 Hickory tree genus – a bit scary, anyway! (5)
31 Made rotten garden waste! (9)
34 Dark red, bitter cherry (7)
36 A robust euphorbia – as featured in Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* (4,3)
37 Horticultural term indicating fragrance… in peapod or a tare (7)
38 Light blueish-purple colour of eg *Verbena officinalis* (5)
39 After 1 across, they're *Schlumbergera* plants (5)
40 Surrey location of Claremont Landscape Garden – sheer rocks! (5)
42 Shouts encouragement for underground growth? (5)
45 See 1 across.

SOLUTIONS WILL BE PRINTED IN THE FEBRUARY ISSUE

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ACROSS: 1 Mealy bug **6** Calico **9** Fergus **10** Ringlet **11** Isis **13** Ox-eye **14** Cone **15** Nitrates **16** Sitka **18** Domed **20** Infinity **22** Keys **24** Meyer **25** Corm **26** Red rose **27** Gather **29** Hermes **30** Fishmeal.

DOWN: 2 Eye **3** Ligustrum **4** Bistort **5** Gardens **6** Cankers **7** Lilac **8** Cotoneaster **12** Spindle tree **17** Tanacetum **19** Damsons **20** Ivy leaf **21** Forages **23** Sedum **28** Era.

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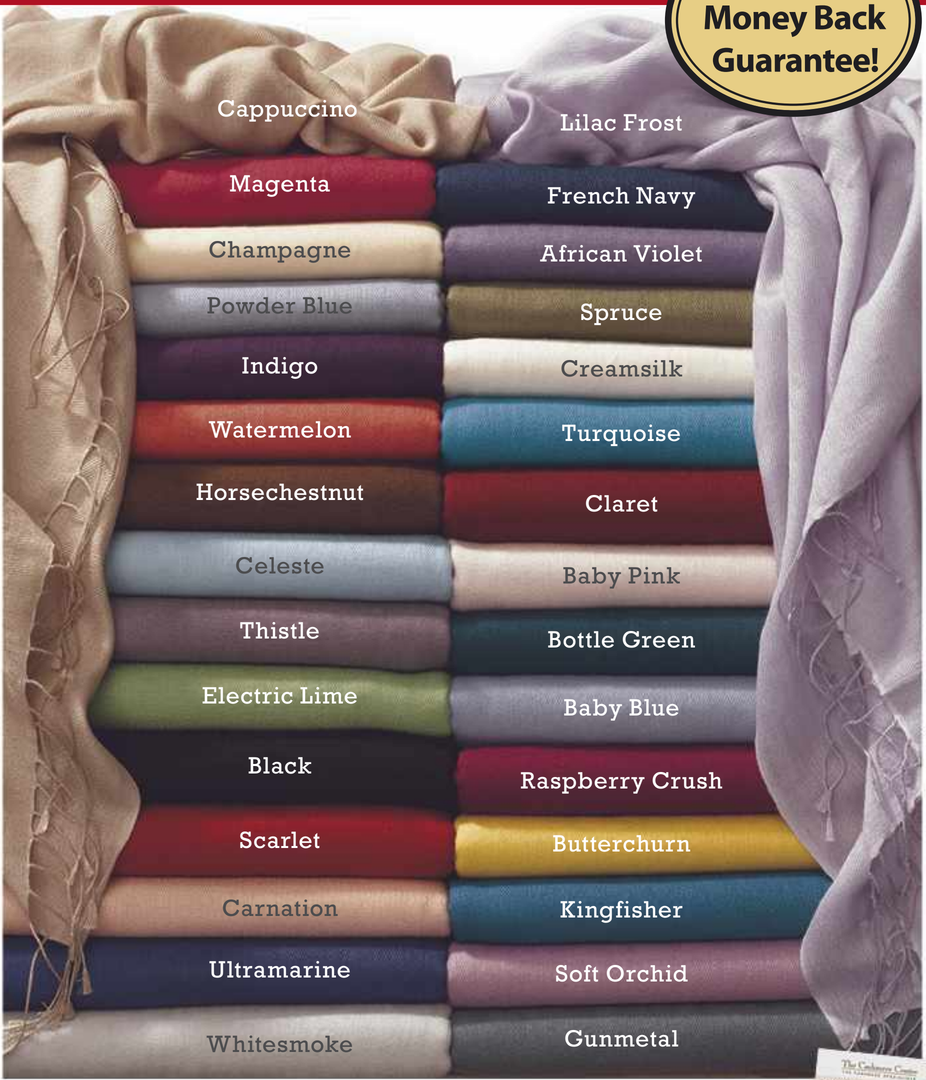
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Reader offers

OFFER ONE

Win a VIP day at Chelsea Flower Show 2014

Ulf Nordfjell designed the Laurent-Perrier garden at Chelsea in 2013, but who is the designer for 2014?

Here's your chance to win tickets to next year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show – the premier gardening event showcasing the best in garden design and plantsmanship. One lucky winner will receive two tickets to visit the show on RHS members day, Wednesday 21 May 2014. You'll be given a tour of the show with one of the RHS show team together with GARDENS ILLUSTRATED editor Juliet Roberts, as well as enjoying a glass of champagne on the Laurent-Perrier garden. Plus your prize will include RHS membership for one year.

To enter the competition, please answer the following: **Who will be designing the Laurent-Perrier garden for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2014?**

Send your answer on a postcard along with your name, address and contact details to:

GARDENS ILLUSTRATED 204/Chelsea 2014,
PO Box 501, Leicester LE94 0AA.

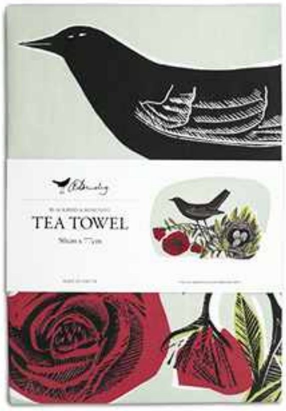
Or enter online at gardensillustrated.com

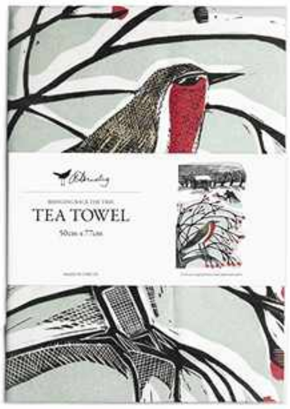
Closing date 15 January 2014.

Find out more details on RHS membership benefits and the Chelsea Flower Show itself at rhs.org.uk. See also terms and conditions opposite.

OFFER TWO

Special offer on Angela Harding tea towels





Printmaker and painter Angela Harding – whose images can be seen illustrating our columnist Frank Ronan's musings each month – has added tea towels to her range, printed with two of her characteristic designs. Made of 100 per cent cotton, *Blackbird and Rose Nest* and *Bringing Back the Tree* can be bought separately for £11. Or Angela is offering GARDENS ILLUSTRATED readers the opportunity to buy both designs for £18.50 (including p&p*) – saving £3.50.

To order please contact Angela on 01572 737784, email harding11@btinternet.com or go to **angelaharding.co.uk**. Please quote 'Gardens Illustrated' when placing your order.

* Free p&p refers to UK only. Overseas p&p priced separately.

Offer valid until 31 December 2013.

20% off Green & Spring Christmas collection

OFFER THREE

Skincare company Green & Spring takes its inspiration from nature, using herbs and flowers you'll find in the British countryside to create its 100 per cent natural botanical product range. Plants used include lavender, chamomile, rosehip, red clover, geranium, marshmallow, comfrey, fennel and rose.

To celebrate Christmas, Green & Spring is offering GARDENS ILLUSTRATED readers a 20 per cent discount on its limited-edition gift sets.

To order

Make your selection at **greenandspring.com** and use the code 'GIR20' when prompted.

Offer closes 25 December 2013. For guaranteed Christmas delivery, order by 19 December 2013.

For more information about Green & Spring products go to greenandspring.com

All Green & Spring products are free from parabens, SLS, SLES, PEGS, glycols, petrochemicals, synthetic colours and fragrances and have not been tested on animals.

1

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– offer price £18

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- 50ml Relaxing Body Lotion
- 50ml Relaxing Shampoo
- Lavender-filled bird

2

2 Indulging Bird Cage £25
– offer price £20

An English country garden blend of the delicate scent of rose, fragrant jasmine and the restful properties of red clover and elderflower.

- 50ml Indulging Shower & Bath Foam
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- 2 Indulging Travel Candles (37g each)

3

3 Revitalising Bird Cage £19.50
– offer price £15.60

Inspired by green, grassy fields, blending invigorating peppermint with the stimulating properties of dandelion and fennel.

- 50ml Revitalising Shower & Bath Foam
- 50ml Exfoliating Body Wash
- 50ml Revitalising Body Lotion
- Green & Spring flannel

4

4 Christmas Cracker £17.50
– offer price £14

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW COMPETITION AND CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD (ON PAGE 98)
1 The promoter is Immediate Media Company Bristol. **2** Entrants must be aged 18 years or older, excluding the promoter's employees. **3** The closing date for entries to the Christmas Crossword competition and the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2014 competition is 15 January 2014. Entries received after the closing date of the promotion will not be considered. **4** By entering the promotion, the participants agree to be bound by all the rules of the promotion. **5** Entrants must supply to Immediate Media Co their full name, email address and daytime telephone number. The Promoter will use entrants' personal details in accordance with the Immediate Privacy Policy (www.immediatemedia.co.uk/privacy). **6** Only one entry will be permitted per person, regardless of method of entry. **7** The winning entrants for each competition will be the first correct entries drawn at random from all the correct entries after the closing date. **8** The draw is final and no correspondence will be entered into. The winner will be notified within 20 days of the close of the promotion by post/telephone/email. **9** There is no cash alternative and the prizes are not transferable. Each prize must be taken as stated and cannot be deferred. The Promoter reserves the right to substitute a prize with one of the same or greater value. RHS Chelsea Flower Show prize will be taken on Wednesday 21 May 2014. It allows entry to the show for two people. The prize includes one glass of Laurent-Perrier Brut champagne per person. It does not include transport to the show or any individual expenditure at the show. The RHS gift membership is for one person. **10** For details of the winners send an SAE to Immediate Media Company Bristol, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN within two months of the closing date. **11** The Promoter does not accept any responsibility for lost, delayed or fraudulent entries. **12** If the winner is unable to be contacted within 30 days of the promotions' closing date, the Promoter reserves the right to offer a prize to a runner up, or to re-offer the prize in any future promotion. **13** The Promoter excludes liability to the full extent permitted by law for any loss, damage or injury occurring to the participant arising from his or her entry into the promotion or occurring to the winner arising from his or her acceptance of a prize. **14** Each promotion is subject to the laws of England. By entering, you undertake that you are not contravening any laws local to you. **15** Laurent-Perrier would like to keep you informed by email, post or telephone of their special offers and promotions. Please write 'Do not contact Laurent-Perrier' on your entry if you would prefer not to receive these. **16** Immediate Media Company Limited (publishers of GARDENS ILLUSTRATED) would love to keep you informed by post or telephone of special offers and promotions from the Immediate Media Company Group. Please write 'Do not contact Immediate Media Co Ltd' if you would prefer not to receive these. GARDENS ILLUSTRATED would like to keep you informed of newsletters, special offers and other promotions by email or text message. Please write your email address and mobile number on your postcard if you would like to receive these. You may unsubscribe from these at any time.

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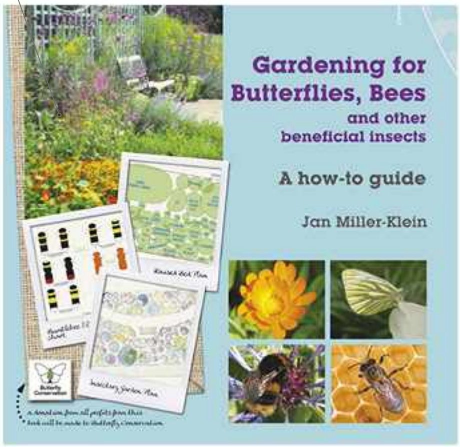

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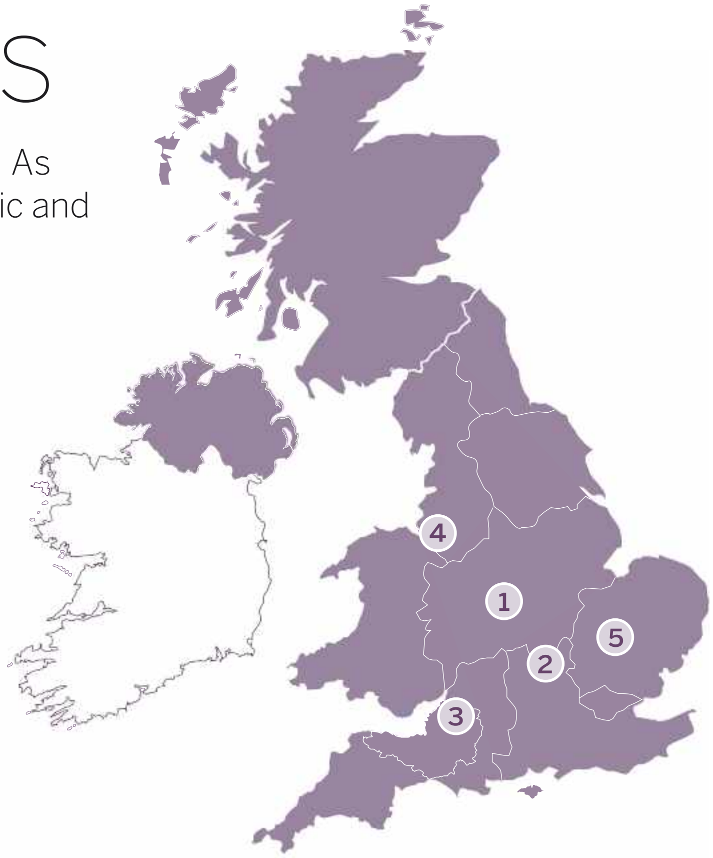

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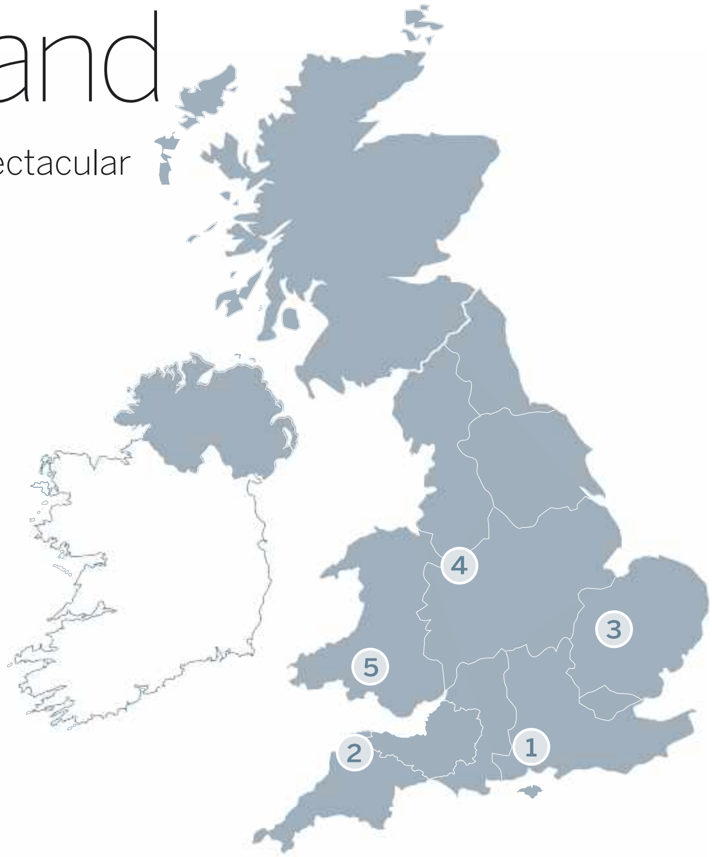

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Credit: Joanne Fawcett

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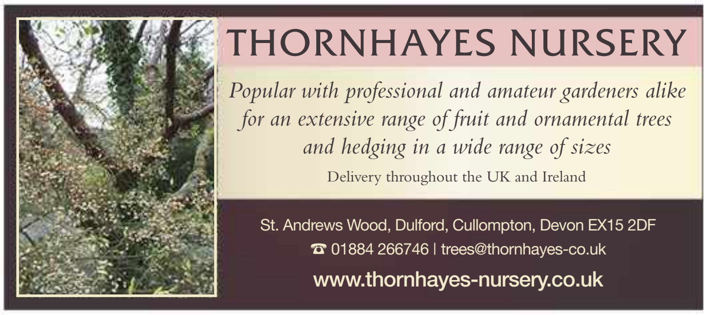

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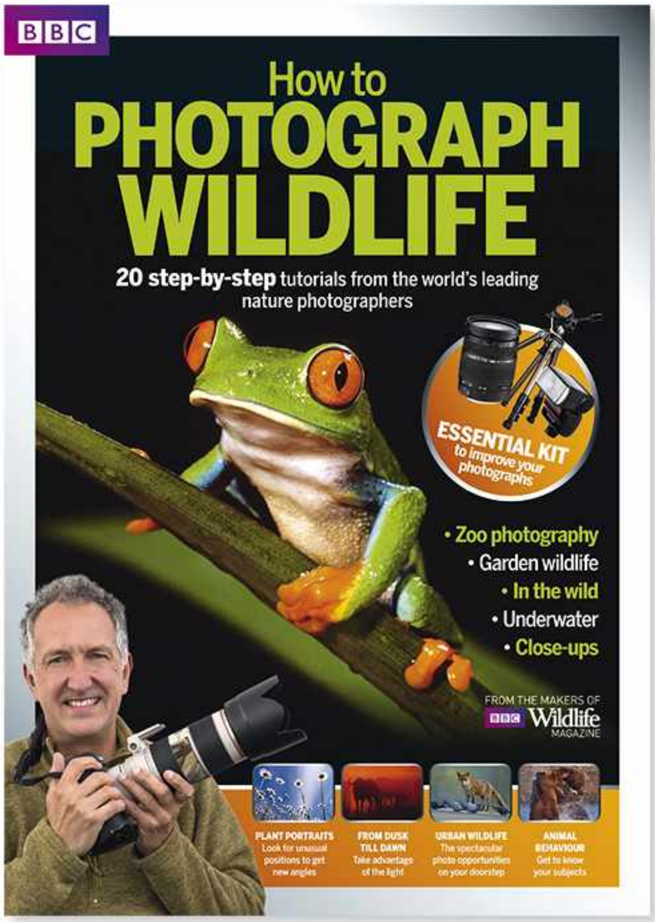

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Write Your Way To A New Career!

Writers Bureau Celebrates Twenty-four Years of Helping New Writers

by Nick Daws

Tim Skelton

Hazel McHaffie

When distance-learning pioneer Ernest Metcalfe founded The Writers Bureau in the late 1980s, he can hardly have dared hope that twenty-four years on it would be acknowledged as Britain's leading writing school. Yet so it proved, with thousands of Writers Bureau students seeing their work in print for the first time. And, for many of those who persevered with their writing, the dream of becoming a successful writer has turned into reality.

Students such as Tim Skelton. An engineer by profession, he had always harboured an ambition to write, and at the age of 40 signed up with The Writers Bureau. The decision changed his life: "My writing career took off exponentially. I started appearing regularly in lifestyle and in-flight magazines. The following year I was commissioned by Bradt Travel Guides to write a guidebook to Luxembourg. I've appeared in The Times and The Independent, and updated guidebooks for Fodor's, Thomas Cook, and the AA."

> *"My writing career took off exponentially."*

Another student who benefited was Hazel McHaffie. Hazel wanted to make her academic work in Medical Ethics more accessible to people, and decided to write the themes into novels. Following her Writers Bureau course, Hazel has had five novels published, and appeared at the Edinburgh International Book Festival. She also has her own website at www.hazelmchaffie.com.

Sometimes studying with The Writers Bureau takes students down new and unexpected paths. Patricia Holness originally enrolled on The Writers Bureau's Writing for Children course. However, she soon realised that what she was learning applied to other types of writing as well.

She is now a full-time writer, regularly selling short stories for both children and adults. She also has a monthly column in Devon Life.

These are just a selection from the inspirational true stories from students of The Writers Bureau. There's no reason why YOU couldn't be their next success story. With a 15-day free trial and money-back guarantee, there is nothing to lose and potentially a whole new career to gain! So why not visit their website at www.writersbureau.com or call on Freephone 0800 856 2008 for more information?

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Hannah Evans, Winchester "I've been published in The Guardian and Good Life earning £400. And now I've got my first book published by Bloomsbury called MOB Rule: Lessons Learned by a Mother of Boys. The Writers Bureau course provided me with structure, stopped my procrastination but most importantly it provided the impetus to try something different."

Michael Foley, Essex "Completing The Writers Bureau course has made it possible for me to attain my life-long ambition of becoming a published writer. The level of success I have achieved has far outweighed what I was hoping for when beginning the course. I have now had seventeen books published with two more under publication at the moment."

Jane Isaac, Northamptonshire "When I started the Writers Bureau course, I wanted to explore avenues for my writing and develop and strengthen my personal style. I had no idea that it would lead to me being a published writer of novels and short stories. I still pinch myself when I receive emails and messages from readers who've enjoyed my work or when I give talks to book clubs and visit bookstores to do signings. These are magical moments that have changed my life – my dream has come true."

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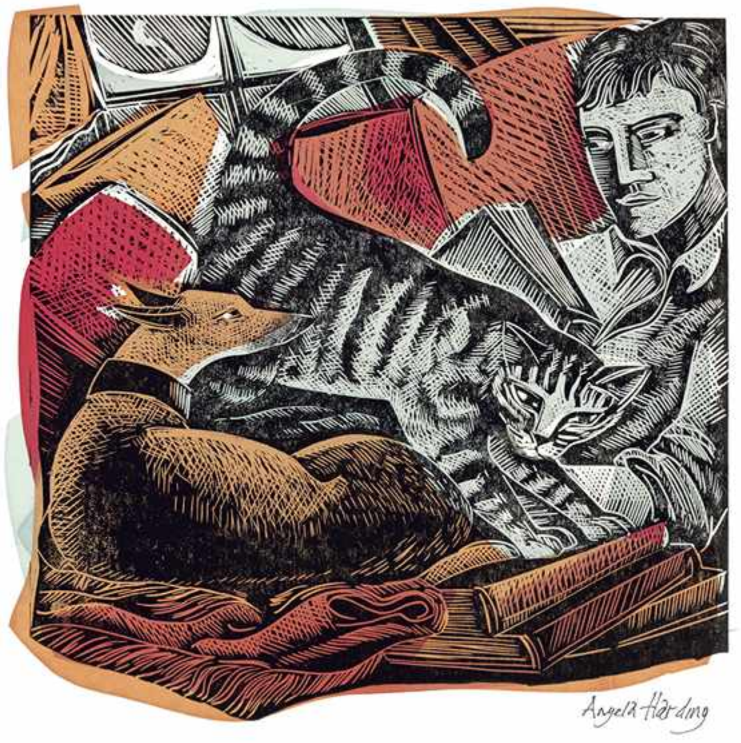
ALLAN POLLOK-MORRIS

Warm words

When it's cold outside nothing beats a good gardening read in front of a roaring fire

WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **ANGELA HARDING**



By now I'm doing most of my gardening on the sofa, dog and legs under a blanket and cat making regular attempts to correct what is to him the unsupportable situation of my hands and eyes being occupied by a book or screen when he is so obviously more tactile and beautiful. Warming the three of us is a wood fire, of oak and ash and sometimes a bit of the cherry the bees used to live in (though I left the trunk on the common and some came back this summer), cut to logs of 22 inches that rest on firedogs, which are tulips standing on their bulbs and leaves. I thought of the dogs, Miles drew them and a blacksmith called Pete Crownshaw, who lives only down the road but is one of the best in the country, put them in iron for us. If the fire would only draw properly it might be an idyll.

You can see the excellence of good ideas put into agile prose

It is lit with newspapers. I had a friend who would scorn that and insist that his fires were lit with no more than a single match. He is dead now but always comes to mind as I scrunch and twist and roll. Another friend throws in entire packets of firelighters and sometimes petrol as well. Astonishingly he is not dead. We used to have a plentiful supply of our own papers, but about the time of the last Gulf War the fashion started for putting colour pictures of corpses on the front page and I sickened of buying them. Our papers are hand-me-down now and I work them quickly into kindling knots and the occasional glimpse of carnage porn assures me that I will never get the newspaper habit again.

The result is that I am, not unhappily, a bit out of touch. There are only two things I really miss. One is the crossword in *The Guardian* when it was set by Araucaria. The other is Anna Pavord's writing in *The Independent.* So when another friend – the wife, in fact, of the not-dead incendiary – asked me to come with her to a garden festival at Titley, citing as bait the fact that Anna was giving a talk there, I immediately said yes. The festival, called Gardens In The Wild, was charming and full of plants I wanted and if they have it again next year I recommend it to as many of you as can go without ruining it by overcrowding.

Anna though, was what I went to see and, aside from her sparkling talk, I was thrilled to find she had a book out that I hadn't heard about. It is called *The Curious Gardener* and – I told you I was out of touch – actually came out three years ago in 2010. It is a collection of her pieces from *The Independent*. For those of you who think of Anna Pavord as the towering and learned genius behind *The Tulip* and *The Naming Of Names* (now called *Searching For Order*, for reasons I wouldn't mind knowing), and who don't read *The Independent* (and Anna was my only motive there), this comparatively small book will be a revelation. You can still see the dogged and scholarly researcher at work, and you can still see the excellence of good ideas put into agile prose.

This is another side of her – or a few more sides of her. You get bits of the intrepid traveller, and bits of the doughty, self-sufficient, seventies earth mother, and bits of the quivering aesthete, and the cultural tourist. There is a glistening running thread of her brutal cynicism towards her three daughters, and that is only part of the laugh-like-a-drain element. It is not one of those books that gets absorbed on a shelf once read. You'll want it in the pile by your elbow, in front of the fire, for winter gardening. If you don't have it, get it. If you already do, get another to give away. □

Frank Ronan is a novelist who lives and gardens in Worcestershire

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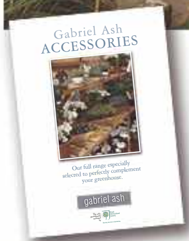

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